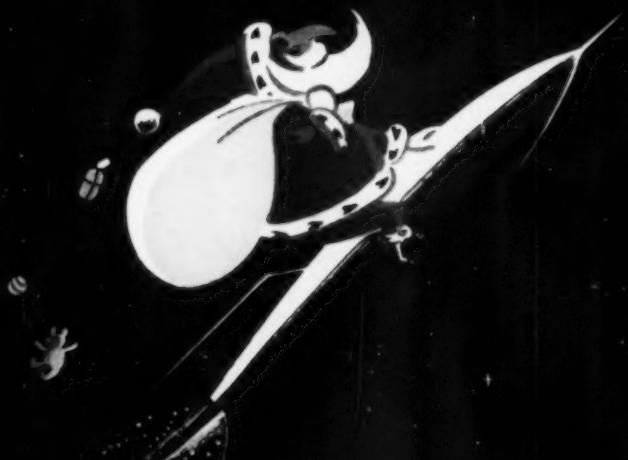


PUNCH



Almanack
for
1953



Pinch, November 3 1952



Under a sky whose colour is a silvery variation on a theme of blue . . . High above the comfortable valley, but still as far as ever from the ancient, lonely peaks . . . Content for a moment with oneself, with one another and even with all the world . . . And for perfection one thing more—

NUMBER SEVEN

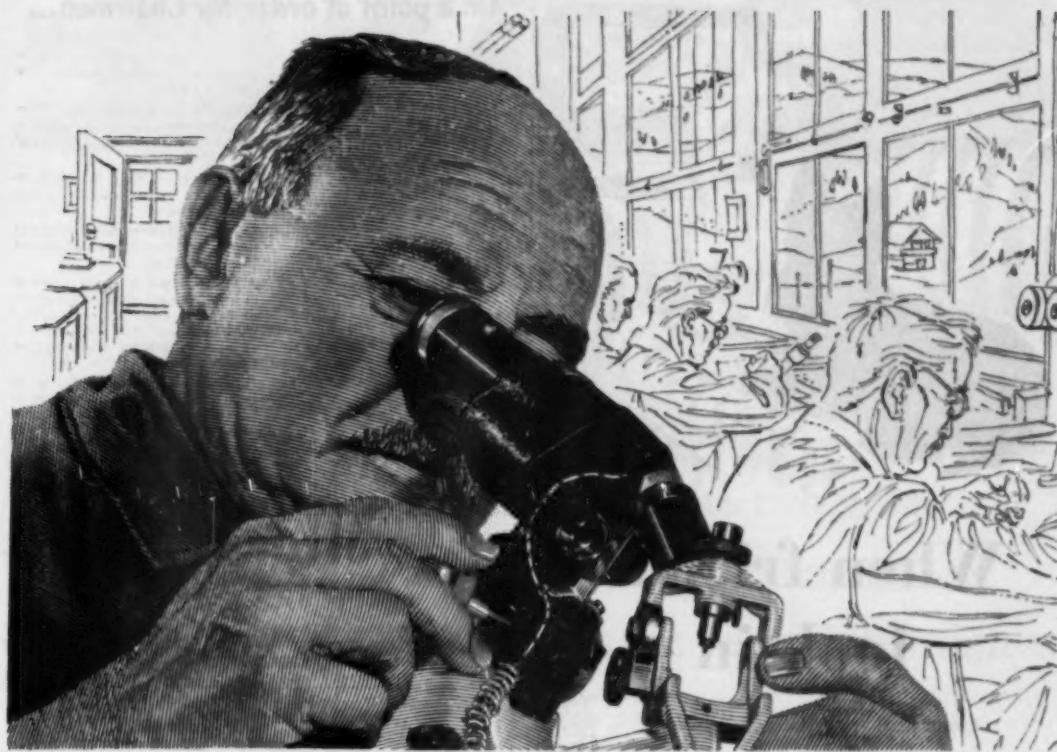
Abdulla 'Virginia' No. 7, 20 for 3/11



—by ABDULLA

ABDULLA & COMPANY LIMITED • 173 NEW BOND STREET • LONDON W1

TIME IS THE ART OF THE SWISS



The secret

SWITZERLAND is so famous for good watches that nine out of ten Swiss watches are exported — sold all over the world. What is the Swiss secret?

Largely — specialisation. For three centuries Switzerland has been building up a nation within a nation. She gives her nation of 50,000 watchmakers the hardest, longest training any technician ever underwent. She gives them instruments, equipment, laboratories, production-methods that are the most advanced in the world. Result: she is watchmaker to the world.

But how can you, without expert knowledge, judge watches made by experts? Luckily, you've an expert near you: your qualified jeweller. As no one else can, he can tell you which is a good watch and why; give you full choice from the latest models; guarantee that a new watch is in perfect condition; give you skilled servicing in the future.

When you choose a fine Swiss jewelled-lever watch, choose with your jeweller's help.

Your jeweller's knowledge is your safeguard

The WATCHMAKERS



OF SWITZERLAND





When friends look in

Good hosts offer Scotch Whisky with confidence and pride: they know it has no equal for refreshment and enjoyment. How extra good it is when the choice is 'Black & White'. Blended in the special 'Black & White' way this is Scotch at its best—smooth, mellow and especially satisfying.



'BLACK & WHITE' SCOTCH WHISKY

The Secret is in the Blending

By Appointment
to the late King George VI.



Scotch Whisky Distillers
James Buchanan & Co. Ltd.

"On a point of order, Mr. Chairman..."



... the Secretary will shortly be in a state of academic nudity. His gown is on fire.

That, Sir, is a point of arson. Who, Mr. Secretary, has applied this fire-work or feu d'artifice to the tail of your taga?

The Librarian, Sir. Activated, no doubt, by vulgar jealousy of my new Maenson.

I fine the Librarian two shillings and sixpence. And what is a Maenson? (Loud laughter).

A Maenson Sir, is a suit which is more than a cut above the average, of flawless cloth and meticulous workmanship. In a Maenson suit, even the Librarian would appear presentable.

A consummation devoutly to be wished. Mr. Librarian, you are to furnish yourself with a Maenson suit forthwith. And I hereby charge the Treasurer to ensure that the cost of the said Maenson be not obtruded from the Library Fund.*

Maenson

...the fitting choice

* This year a range of discreetly-tailored Maenson suits and overcoats, in fine, lasting cloths, faultless styles and 80 different fittings, awaits your critical appraisal.

Look for this symbol on the dial.

The Watch that winds itself

The
ETERNA-MATIC
PROTECTED PRECISION WATCH
makes an Ideal Gift

The mainspring of this Protected Precision non-magnetic watch is wound at the slightest hand motion by the unique noiseless, unbreakable ball-bearing mechanism comprising five minute balls weighing less than one twenty-five-thousandth of an ounce. ETERNA-MATIC and ETERNA Watches are renowned throughout the world for their accuracy and beauty of design.

107 DT. Lady's waterproof model. 17-jewels non-magnetic shock-absorbing lever movement; stainless steel case; cordovan band, available in a choice of colours. £30 107 BG. As above, but not waterproof. £28

Similar models to above available with leather straps.

141 D. Man's waterproof model. 17-jewels non-magnetic shock-absorbing lever movement; stainless steel waterproof case with leather strap. £29 5 0

ETERNA-MATIC Watches enjoy the distinction of being the first with a ball-bearing and the range includes the smallest watch of this kind in the world (illustrated on left). Ladies' models, from £28. 0. 0; Men's from £24. 10. 0.

Available from all high-class watchmakers also a wide range of ETERNA Watches with keyless movements.

Sole Distributors for Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Wholesale only)
ROBERT PRINGLE & SONS
(ETERNA DEPARTMENT)
36-42 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.1



STANLOW



SHELL HAVEN



HEYSHAM

It is staggering to  consider that you could travel to the sun and back twenty-two times and the miles covered would still not equal the number of gallons flowing annually from the two great groups of British refineries — the one SHELL the other BP. These resources are behind this sign at your local garage.



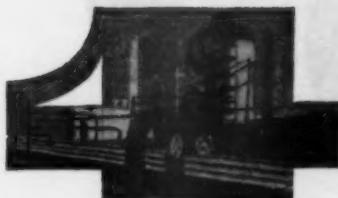
*93,000,000 miles to the sun

*4,150,000,000 gallons from

the SHELL and BP refineries.

Or sixteen and a quarter million tons out of a total UK production of twenty-three million.

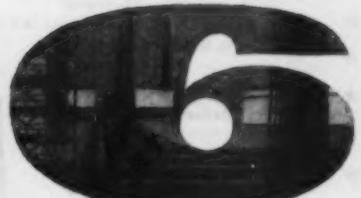
six in service



LLANDARCY



GRANGEMOUTH



KENT (Isle of Grain)
(nearing completion)



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to
The late King George VI



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
King Frederik IX



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
King Gustaf VI Adolf



By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H. M.
The Queen of the Netherlands

Precious moments

Through four generations

CHERRY HEERING has
witnessed as well as created

many precious moments.

Unchanged since 1818, this old Danish delight
will grace your day whenever and
wherever you meet with it.



CHERRY HEERING

World famous liqueur since 1818



A present for a man . . .

that shows great presence of mind

'The Huntsman'—this popular
presentation set for men comes in an
attractive maroon pack with a hunting
print label. Contains a handy travel-
size flacon each of After Shave Lotion
and Men's Brilliantine. Plus—new in
England, a bowl filled with spicy
shaving soap with the same fragrance
as the well-known Lenthalic
Shaving Cream. Price complete 18.3
refills for bowl 4/9.

quiet, perfect grooming by

Lenthalic





BRIGHT AND EARLY

"Bonjour, M'sieu. This morning you are the early worm."

"Bird, Henri. And I propose to catch myself a delicious drink."

"Entendu. And after the banquet M'sieu is well?"

"Gay as a finch, as you so picturesquely put it. Complete

recovery from a night of old-world jollity."

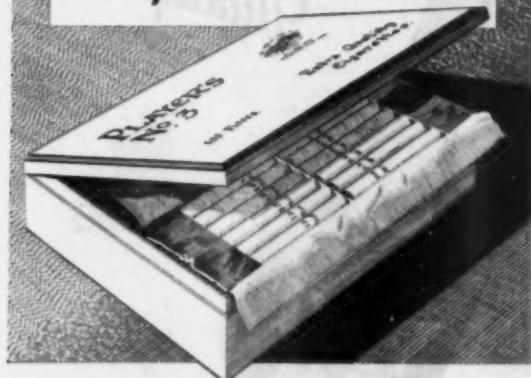
"And with the gin you took the Rose's Lime Juice?"

"Henri—you begin to comprehend the British train of life. Beaucoup de gin, beaucoup de Rose's. Here goes! First today . . ."

ROSE'S — for Gin and Lime

ROSE'S ALSO MAKE FINE FRUIT SQUASHES

For special occasions



AN ORDINARY EVENT BECOMES A VERY SPECIAL OCCASION WHEN SOMEONE TAKES THE TROUBLE TO PROVIDE—AMONG OTHER THINGS—THE EXTRA QUALITY CIGARETTE. AT CHRISTMAS TIME IT IS THESE LITTLE GESTURES WHICH MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.

PLAYER'S NO. 3

The Quality Cigarette

also in boxes of 50

[1p 10s]

CAR'S INSIDE STORY

Happy when it's slippery?

All right—we're all marvellous drivers!

But let's be honest; on grease or ice—it's driver plus car that make a total. When roads are slippery there's that extra safety in a Javelin. A Javelin responds to your control and sense of touch. You feel the car taking a grip of the road and you're grateful. In fog, too, a Javelin's short bonnet gives extra visibility.

On good days, when motoring is all fun, there's plenty in a Javelin to play with—effortless acceleration (0-50 in 15.4 secs.) and a genuine 80 m.p.h. And you can cruise along sensing those torsion bars doing what only torsion bar suspension can do to bumps; relishing that gear box all the experts praise.

The Javelin is a waste of money if you don't care what a car does. There's such a lot built into it that doesn't really show until you have one in your hands—real family comfort—economy—and performance. Incidentally, the Javelin won outright the Closed Car Section of the R.A.C. International Rally of Great Britain this year.

Best speed, electrically timed, 80 m.p.h. Acceleration 0-50 m.p.h. in 15.4 secs. ("The Motor" 1952 Road Test). Horizontally opposed flat-four engine* gives 30 m.p.g.



**The 1½ litre
JOWETT JAVELIN**

one day—it has to be YOURS!

The Javelin's sister car,
the JOWETT JUPITER



The 90 m.p.h., high performance Jowett JUPITER, winner of 9 major events in the 1950-51 season. Winner of Le Mans (1½ litre class) for the third year running in 1952. This amazingly successful 1½ litre sports convertible has basically the same engine* as the Jowett Javelin. Its ample luggage space is externally accessible.

*Both Javelin and Jupiter employ the Series III engine which has been developed from continued successful competition work and strenuous overseas use. The extensive modifications include a new design crankshaft, new type bearings and increased oil flow.

MADE BY JOWETT CARS LIMITED, IDLE, BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE

*Give your face a
Happy Xmas too!*



Just casually mention that you'd like a Remington Contour 6 electric shaver for Christmas. It's the gift of the season—and one that will last you a lifetime! Contour shaving has to be experienced to be believed. No blades, no lather, no bother. Just plug in—and click, you're Contour Shaving. Ask your dealer for a demonstration or write for illustrated leaflet.

REMINGTON Contour 6 ELECTRIC DRY SHAVER

The Gift that lasts a lifetime



REMINGTON RAND LTD., DEPT. S16, 1-19 NEW OXFORD ST., W.C.1



A ROAD
CRUISE
for
CHRISTMAS

We know that Christmas time is expensive—and, when it comes to that present "to-yourself-from-yourself," you may say let it wait. We agree—let it wait till the Road Cruise Season begins. Then enjoy a wonderful touring holiday in Britain or on the Continent . . . but fix it now with BARTON'S—the Road Cruise Experts. Write for booklet, etc.

**BARTON
ROAD CRUISES
CHILWELL NOTTS**



'Quality Yells'



By Appointment
Scotch Whisky Distillers
to the late King George VI
Wm. Sanderson & Son, Ltd.

The Distinctive Whisky in The Distinctive Bottle

WM. SANDERSON & SON LTD., QUALITY STREET, LEITH

LONDON OFFICE: BATH HOUSE, PICCADILLY, W.1

Sobranie

as you savour a new flavour and accept a different aroma; and, as you exhale, a sigh of contentment and satisfaction that at last a cigarette maker has understood your real smoking needs . . .

This is luxury . . . This is smoking for smoking's sake. Cool and smooth as you inhale; a subtle soothing of jangled nerves



If you are resident abroad and have difficulty in obtaining Sobranie Cigarettes or Pipe Tobaccos, please write for duty free prices or name of Agent in your country to
SORBRANIE LIMITED
130-4 CITY ROAD
LONDON E.C.1

Sobranie Straight Cut is made to the recipe of one gifted family, it contains the richest Virginia leaf privily selected by the same hereditary genius. The result is a cigarette you can offer your friends with pride and which you will smoke yourself for the satisfaction it brings and the problems it seems to solve — and, thank Sobranie goodness, you can repeat it without becoming its slave.

The price for a Sobranie product is good news in itself: 4/- for 20 . . . and there are larger packs at 10/- for 50, and 20/- for 100

There are many whom nothing but Virginia cigarettes will satisfy . . . and for them
SORBRANIE VIRGINIA No. 40
are a heaven sent boon — they add the hereditary genius of Sobranie to a choice of the golden leaf of old Virginia
5/- for 25



There are still connoisseurs who insist that a Turkish cigarette is the only possible smoke for a truly discerning palate . . . and
BALKAN SORBRANIE TURKISH is their final word
8/- for 25

Sobranie

There are a few more souls who find in
SORBRANIE BLACK RUSSIANS
a touch of the exotic (first designed to please a Russian Grand Duke) which adds not to the finest Oriental leaf . . .
7/- for 25



For the man wedded to his pipe there are two tobaccos, each of which is in a class apart
BALKAN SORBRANIE SMOKING MIXTURE
and
BALKAN SORBRANIE VIRGINIA No. 10
1 oz. size 5/-

There is no more
easier than this
anywhere in the world,
and you may have difficulty
finding a Barrie garment
in pure Cashmere, Cashmilon and Shetland.
It will be found in the better stores and shops.

Barrie
KNITWEAR

BARRIE & KERSL LTD - HAWICK - SCOTLAND

MOTOLUXE
The cosiest of COATS

You'll enjoy all-weather motoring in this cosiest 'Motoluxe' coat, fashionably tailored in the finest fur fabric. For added luxury, in the car and out-of-doors, there are other 'Motoluxe' comforts of the same supreme quality—'Motoluxe' Motor Rugs with Valise Footmuffs to match—'Motoluxe' Mitts and Hats to match. 'Motoluxe' Coats for men too!

Write for the name of your nearest supplier.

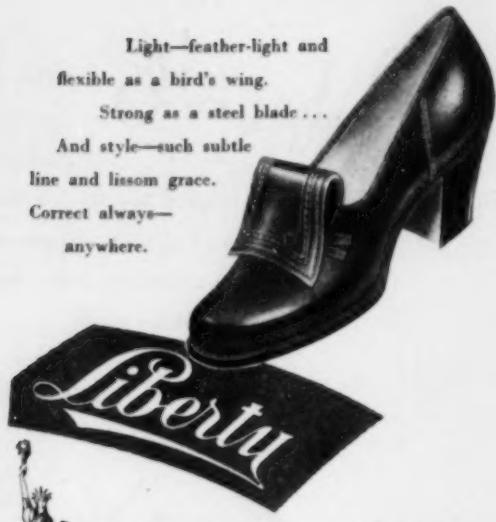
LEE BROTHERS (OVERWEAR) LTD., Queen Street Works,
54 Regent Street, London, N.W.1. 1848—Established over 100 years—1952

Light—feather-light and
flexible as a bird's wing.

Strong as a steel blade...

And style—such subtle
line and lissom grace.

Correct always—
anywhere.



"County Fayre" (Model Somerset)
in soft red and an autumnal brown calf.
Very flexible.

55/-

LIBERTY SHOES LTD., Leicester



NOTON LUGGAGE
Seen in good company

AVAILABLE AT 6,000 STOCKISTS

...and the lovely bloom of Complexion Powder, carefully chosen to tone with your skin. Now comes Yardley Lipstick harmonized with your colouring and your dress. It keeps your lips as soft as roses.

YARDLEY





Christmas Cards

LET 'POST' ADVISE YOU
How to go one better
than your friends

If sent Jolly Robins (B) show your distaste by sending scientific robin (A). If sent A, suggest with surrealist robin (C), that surely Art has its place. C, in turn can be made to feel out of date with very late Pischwepso (D). To make A, C & D feel absurdly highbrow, all you have to do is send Jolly Robins (B).



A



B



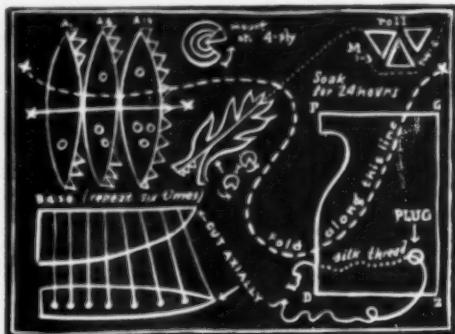
C



D

YOUNG ROBIN

FOR THE YOUNG FOLK



ROARS OF LAUGHTER from the young and young of heart in 'Post's' new XMAS PUDDING GAME of SPHERING THE SQUARE.

Cut out this square. Paste it on to a piece of old cardboard or preferably binding paper. Cut neatly along dotted lines, holding point of scissors towards chest and if directions are exactly

followed, HEY PRESTO!! and there is your XMAS PUDDING.

Now for fun and larks. Six or eight young people, preferably of opposite sexes, pick sides. The leader holds pudding on thumb balanced at point D and when the three girls shout BRANDY SAUCE the boys make a pyramid with their hands and the festive sphere is snatched from one corner to the other of the rectangle of players.

Post's GIFT BOX free to all



For children. An underwater submarine which explodes at a touch. Complete with realistic imitation atomic war submarine gun. Or genuine WIG-WAM (above) with scalping knife and scalps.



yearly subscribers who have sent cheque.

ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS

For grown-ups. Are you a doctor? We will send you a novel NEW ERA two-way rustless schwepposcope.

Iceland tops Norway's GIFT



Norway's generous gift to Schweppshire of a young Christmas Tree for planting in denuded Schweppine Forest has been followed by Iceland's giant duty-free snowman, in the likeness of Disraeli, friend of Scandinavia.

Written by Stephen Potter. Drawn by Lewat-Hum



*When you're eating
largely for pleasure . . .*



eat the enjoyable bread . . .

Hovis

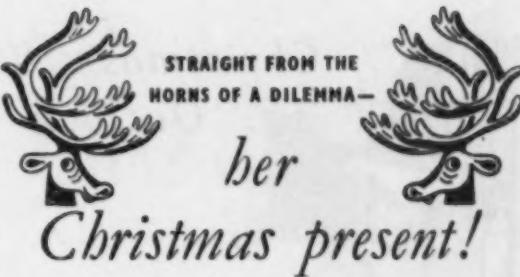


Enjoy the luxury of a warm bed all through the Winter. A Windak Blanket is put over the mattress, the special heating elements covering the whole bed. A Windak can be slept on because the mains current is passed through a transformer, changing it to a low voltage which is perfectly harmless. The elements can be replaced very simply, if ever necessary, giving the Windak extremely long life.

We shall be pleased to forward the name of your nearest stockist

WINDAK LTD. WOODSIDE POYNTON CHESHIRE

JN.R.372



The perfect answer to the present question — 'Pyrex' brand glassware. Every woman knows, likes and uses it: no woman can have enough — or too much. Buy 'Pyrex' anywhere — in big stores, or your local ironmongers.

CHOOSE FROM THESE 'PYREX' PIECES



GIFT SETS

— all four of them ready-made Christmas presents, boxed and ready for the post. 9/6, 14/6, 20/-, 24/3. The larger gift sets are available in special presentation, carry-away packs. A typical gift set — four pieces: round casserole, oblong pie dish, bowl and flan dish, 20/-

REMARKABLE

ROLLING-PIN



— it's made of 'Pyrex'. Just as women prefer marble for pastry-boards, so they prefer glass for the rolling-pin. It's cooler and CLEANER. And to keep it cool, you can fill up with cold water. In individual box, 9/3.



NEW 'PYREX'

COLOURWARE

— a dinner service that has all the famous qualities of transparent 'Pyrex' plus a delightful champagne colour (and ask to see the gay, versatile 'Pyrex' Colourware refrigerator dishes and bowls). 'PYREX' COLOURWARE DINNER SERVICE — 25 pieces to serve six people (platter, plates, two veg. dishes and sauce boat with stand), 112/6

GIVE 'Pyrex' pieces as Christmas presents — AVAILABLE everywhere
ASK your dealer to show you the COMPLETE RANGE

Kindly insist on



'PYREX'

Regd. Trade Mark

JAMES A. JOBLING & CO LTD WEAR GLASS WORKS SUNDERLAND

SOLE MANUFACTURERS OF 'PYREX' IN THE U.K.

Christmas Outlook



COLD and dark tonight? Who cares! Christmas is coming and there's magic in the air! Picture yourself a child again. Remember those thousand tiny thrills of anticipation you used to feel as each night brought the great day nearer! Will you help us to ensure that, for our great family of all ages (from under one to over ninety) this year's Christmas will live up to expectations? Do please send a gift to General Albert Orsborn, 101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4.

The Salvation Army

Breathing space-



Sheltered from the weather, ventilated as no other room can be, here you have a nursery for the children, an afternoon tea room for your wife, a peaceful spot for your leisure hours. This is a room whose walls are your garden and whose roof is a gaily striped canopy, and it can be yours for something in the region of 25 guineas.

CANOPETTE
Minimum protection—suitable for smaller windows. Cord-operated, with weather proof housing.

KIRSCH 'SUNAIRE'

Fit this most aristocratic of Venetian Blinds and your room takes on a new personality, graciously modern. Each blind is tailor-made for its window, at prices like this: 3-ft x 6-ft. blind £6. 12. 0.



CONTINENTAL
Attractive and practical, cord-operated, minimum weather protection for open casement windows, and a lively addition to any Cocktail Bar.

DEANS of Putney

*Their genial warmth,
a Winter's Tale of sheer delight*

*Their featherlight luxury is a
Midsummer Night's Dream come true..*



Nowhere in the wide, wide world can you find blankets to match the winter-snug, summer-light comfort of LAN-AIR-CEL! Their healthful luxury graces the de-luxe cabins of the QUEEN MARY, the QUEEN ELIZABETH and the CARONIA. They keep B.O.A.C passengers in cool comfort on tropic nights, warm as toast in northern climes. Woven from the purest Scotch wool in lovely pastel shades, and cream, LAN-AIR-CEL are guaranteed for ten years, and their loveliness will outlast your lifetime to become a treasured heirloom. See them for yourself, at any good store!



LAN-AIR-CEL
THE ORIGINAL CELLULAR BLANKETS

FROM APPROX 65/- TAX FREE—in lovely pastel shades & cream

COT SIZES FROM APPROX. 25/6d.

parfums
Caron de Paris



Fleurs de Rocaille

Embody all the delicate charm of tiny flowers.
It is a fragrance of aristocratic daintiness.

CREATED, SEALED AND PACKED IN PARIS. 100% PARISIAN
£8.2.6. In smaller sizes: - £4.13.9 & £3.13.5

Also

BELLOOGIA - NUIT DE NOËL - TABAC BLOND - NARCISSE NOIR - LES POIS DE SENTEUR - FRENCH GANGAN - EN AVION - ACACIOSA

Treasured Quality

Rigg's
SHEETS



1836-1952

Ask your retailer for Rigg Sheets. If any difficulty write for name of retailer to the manufacturers -

RIGG BROS LTD.
38 FAULKNER ST MANCHESTER 1

At
Jacqmar
this Christmas

famous designers present

Cravats
in French Satin
Scarves
in Rich Silk

write for our design leaflets

Jacqmar

16 GROSVENOR STREET W.1

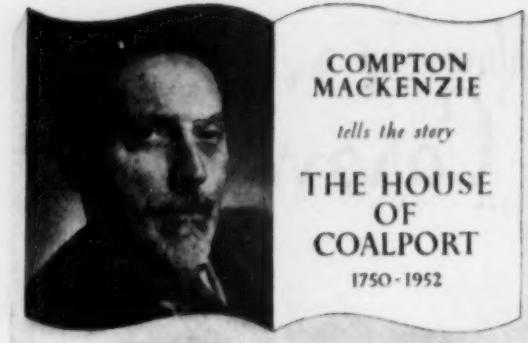


Photo: Robin Adler, F.R.S.A.



The name "Coalport" is literally a household word the world over, and the many who possess Coalport, and the many more who would like to, will find in this book by Sir Compton Mackenzie O.B.E., the tradition behind the product they so much admire. Published by Collins. Illustrated in colour and black-and-white. From your bookseller, 16/- net. In case of difficulty write to Coalport, Stoke-upon-Trent.

The House of
COALPORT
The Finest Bone China
 COALPORT CHINA LIMITED STOKE-UPON-TRENT

L3013G

TILLEY LAMPS
PORTABLE PARAFFIN PRESSURE

This beautiful TILLEY Table Lamp will cut your lighting costs and bring a dignity and grace to an already lovely home. It is difficult to believe that it burns ordinary paraffin, but it does—and only 1½ pints for 12 hours' brilliant 300-candlepower light! It is simple and absolutely safe in use, with no smoke or smell and remember you can take it where you want it, when you want it. Start saving on your lighting bills today.

Send for illustrated priced brochure and name of your nearest Stockist to

THE TILLEY LAMP COMPANY LTD.
 Dept. HT/P.
 15 BACKVILLE ST., LONDON, W.1

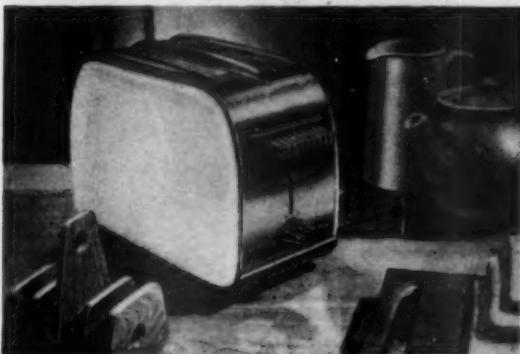
*Warmest greetings and
 Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas
 and Prosperous New Year*

Royal Doulton

Britain's finest crispbread
— it's made from
Britain's finest wheat



MADE ONLY BY
MCVITIE & PRICE LTD.
EDINBURGH · LONDON · MANCHESTER



When you demand perfection

Built with the care of a fine watch, this beautiful automatic toaster makes toast for the discriminating. A symphony in chrome and plastic, it is fitted with an exclusive clock movement that ensures toast to your personal taste. This economic toaster will give years of service, using only 25% of the power of your grill.

Robot FALKS Toaster
PRICE £5.19.6

Obtainable from usual electrical suppliers. For name of nearest stockist write to the makers, FALKS, U Dept., 91 FARRINGDON ROAD, LONDON, E.C.1. West End Showrooms: 20 Mount Street, Park Lane, London, W.1. S.F.T.C.

Why Ovaltine Leads in World-wide Popularity



THE widespread preference for 'Ovaltine', and its regular use in countless thousands of homes is due to long experience of its outstanding quality and value. This delicious food beverage is prepared from Nature's best foods and possesses important nutritive properties.

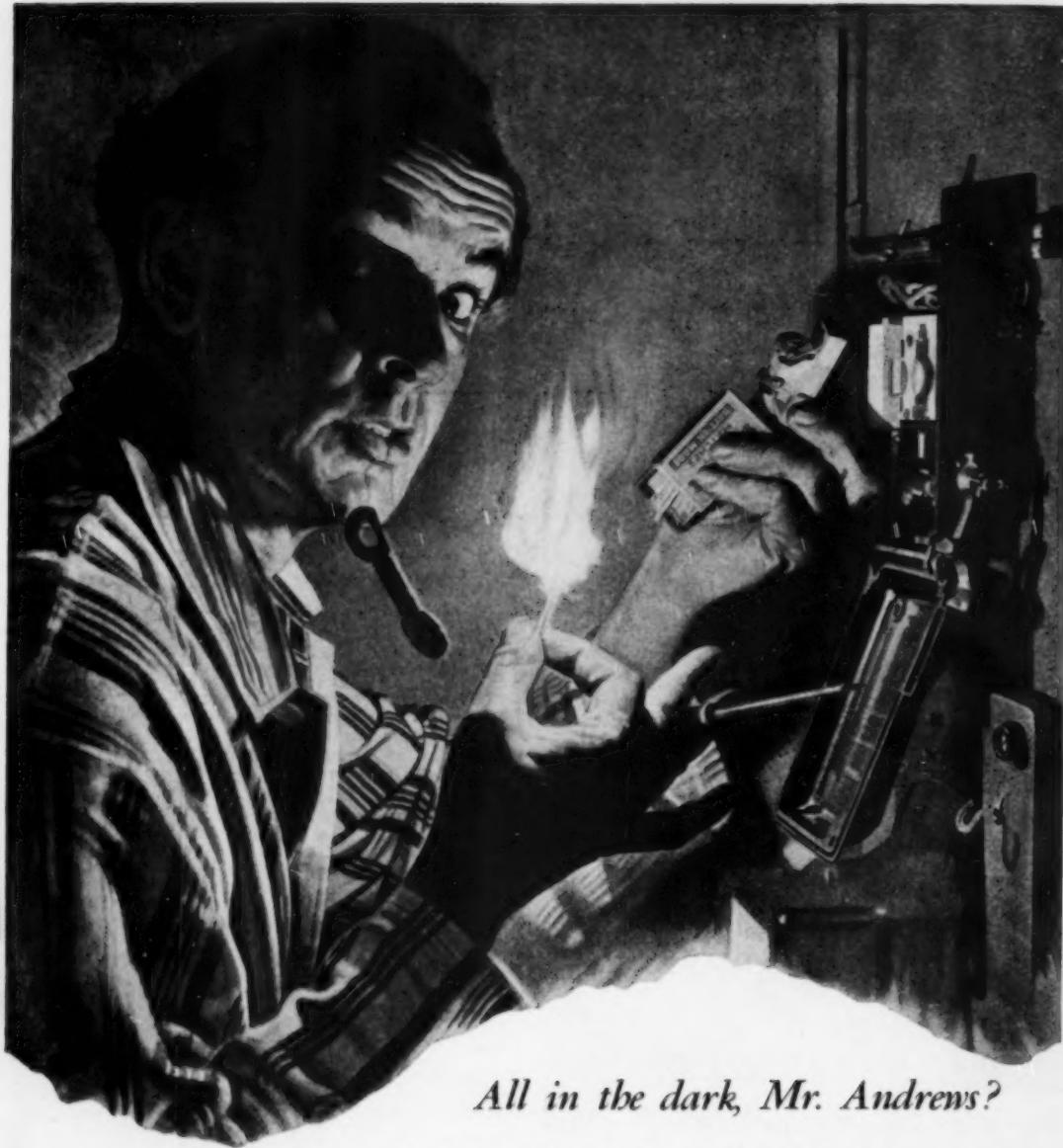
The manufacture of 'Ovaltine' is carried out under strict scientific supervision in the 'Ovaltine' Factory in a Country Garden, and every possible step is taken to perfect the safeguards of purity and hygienic efficiency. The 'Ovaltine' Farms and Laboratories, originally established to control the quality of the ingredients used, are still the guide in purchasing supplies.

Because of its exceptional merit, 'Ovaltine' is the food beverage regularly used in the world's leading hospitals and nursing homes and consistently recommended by doctors everywhere.

It Pays to Buy the Best

Prices in Gt. Britain and N. Ireland:
1/6, 2/6 and 4/6 per tin.





All in the dark, Mr. Andrews?

When the fuses have blown, when the key-hole can't be found, when the lighter runs out of petrol we turn, almost without thinking, to the sure aid of the match. The match is one example among many hundreds in which chemicals by Albright & Wilson, usually anonymously, but so often importantly, serve the world at large. *Every match made in Britain and countless millions of others besides rely on Albright & Wilson's phosphorus products for the light they give.*



Chemicals for Industry

ALBRIGHT & WILSON LTD



Quality
Incomparable



By Appointment
Gin Distillers
to the late King George VI

Gordon's
Stands Supreme

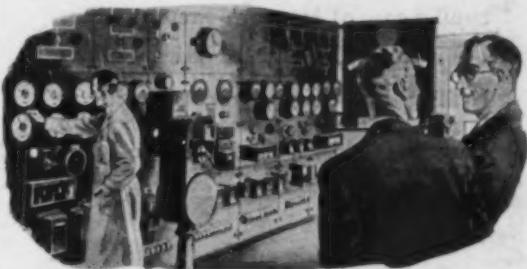
Maximum Prices : Per Bottle 33/9; Half-Bottle 17/7
Quarter-Bottle 9/2; Miniature 3/7. U.K. only

... and not a penny on
battery repairs in 12 years*?

Yes—AND 740 cells in use

What's so special about Nife?

They're made of STEEL—
an engineering job



* These are the actual details of the performance of Nife batteries operated by a Municipal Authority.

Every Nife battery is a superb example of precision engineering in steel. This technical perfection is the reason why there is 'longer life in a Nife'—and almost complete freedom from replacement costs.

ROBUST CONSTRUCTION Made of steel—case and plates—a Nife battery has enormous mechanical strength.

COMPLETE RELIABILITY The almost inert electrolyte is actually a steel preservative—so that the battery does not deteriorate even during long periods of inactivity. It will withstand the heaviest rates of charge or discharge—and recover its voltage almost immediately.

SIMPLE MAINTENANCE A Nife is, for all practical purposes, free from self-discharge—the steel plates cannot buckle or shed active material and there is no corrosion of terminals.



NIFE

STEEL BATTERIES

REPAY THEIR ORIGINAL COST MANY TIMES OVER

NIFE BATTERIES · REDDITCH · WORCESTERSHIRE

BETWEEN



FRIENDS

Send a case of Harvey's famous wines
... from the Bristol Milk Cellars

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| No. 1 | |
| 1 bottle Falanda Sherry, superior rich golden | |
| 1 bottle Brown Cap Port, old tawny | 4os. |
| No. 3 | |
| 1 bottle Fino Sherry, light pale dry | |
| 1 bottle White Cap Port, old full tawny, dry | |
| 1 bottle Sauternes Supérieur | 5os. |
| No. 5 | |
| 1 bottle Merienda Sherry, pale medium dry | |
| 1 bottle Shooting Sherry, full golden | |
| 1 bottle Club Port, old light tawny, special | 6os. |
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| 1 bottle Bristol Dry Sherry, very superior old fino | |
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| 1 bottle Harvey's Reserve Cuvée Champagne | 74s. |

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also UNDERWEAR
SPORTS SHIRTS

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'TAFFLIN' SHIRTS

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AND OTHER
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Designed and made to master every vagary of climate.
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Whether you favour soap and water and a sharp, sharp blade or the plug-in-and-you're-shaving convenience of electricity, here are shaving instruments that have winning ways with the most belligerent bristles. Each is the best of its kind that you'll find in a long lifetime of shaving—all are perfect gifts for the man who looks for comfort and speed when he shaves. Ask for one yourself—and you'll get off to a fresh start every morning.



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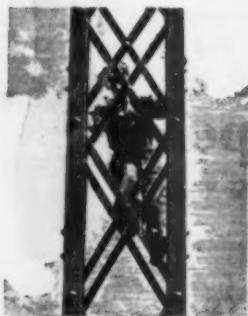
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too young
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Though perched on the end of a gun,
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Of ambrosial Pimm's No. 1 . . .
Who minds a light bag and a fruitless excursion,
As long as there's Pimm's to reward his exertion ?

PIMM'S No.1 THE MOST HEAVENLY DRINK ON EARTH



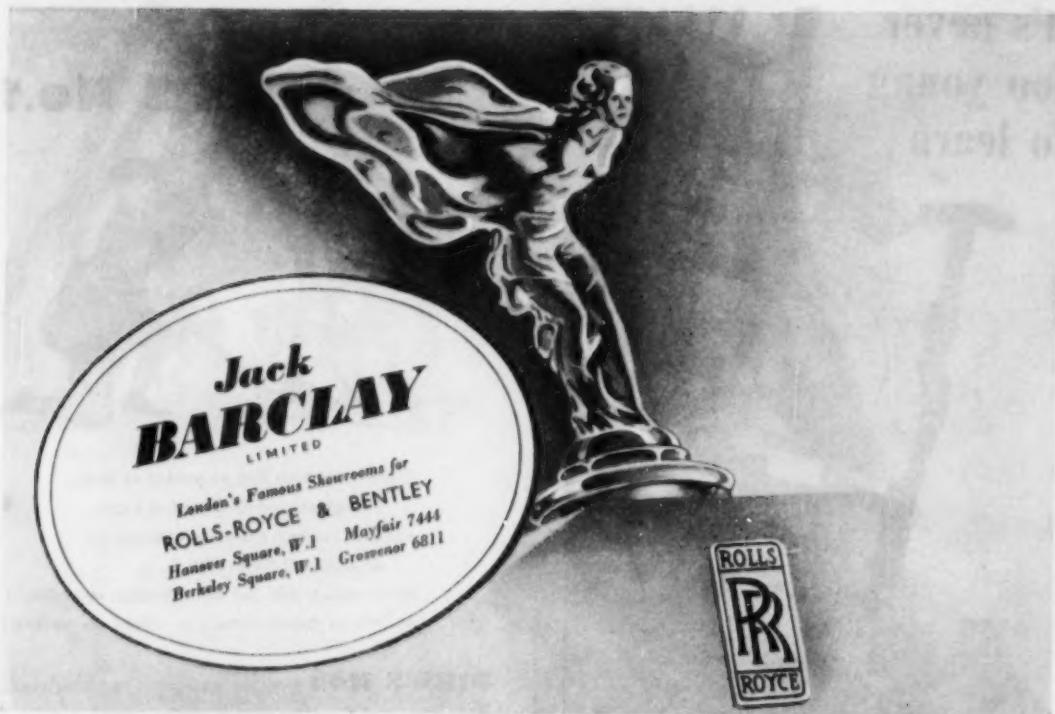
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The same fine quality
Havana wrappers are used
for both brands of cigars.

*Memo to
banqueting
committees:—*

*All over the world
where good
taste and pleasure
meet—you'll
find this
bottle*

Dry Monopole

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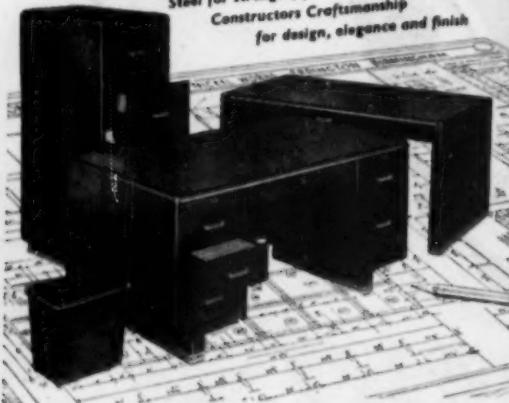
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DESIGNED AS A SUITE

Steel for strength, plus
Constructors Craftsmanship
for design, elegance and finish



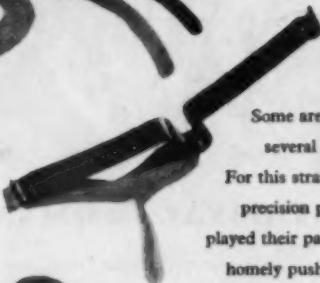
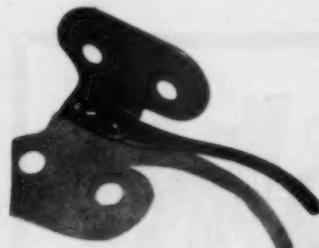
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Land, sea or air?

Some are waterborne ; others stay on terra firma ; some fly —
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For this strange little menagerie is a handful of the thousands of
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Close, stuffy weather holds no terrors for the
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and cozily warm if it turns cold. These are
benefits which everyone can enjoy now that
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Gilding the LILLET

Apry (Apricot Liqueur) or Anisette?

For every bon viveur who likes a dash of "Apry" in his Gin and Lillet there's another who prefers a dash of Marie Brizard Anisette. Yet a third school of thought insists that the simplest and best cocktail is 2/3 Gin, 1/3 Lillet and a squeeze of lemon peel. Which of all these makes the best aperitif? Try them and give the decision.

★ In the 1952 World Cocktail Competition Lillet was a main ingredient in the 1st and 4th cocktails chosen.



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insured life of course...

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ESTABLISHED 1865



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"Take a shop," said the Prince, and Mr. Marcovitch, who, a hundred years ago, was making his cigarettes in an obscure room near Piccadilly knew that their excellence had made him famous. Ever since, Marcovitch Cigarettes have been made to the same high standards as won the approval of that Eminent Personage and his friends; they are rolled of the very finest tobacco, for the pleasure of those whose palates appreciate perfection.



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BLACK AND WHITE
cigarettes for Virginia smokers
25 for 5/5

Also **BLACK AND WHITE**
SMOKING MIXTURE
2 oz. tin 9/6

ISSUED BY GODFREY PHILLIPS LTD



Although one name is as good
as another after opening the morning
mail

one of the big shots at Acles & Pollock went off
in a huff he stalked into our office looking somewhat hurt
holding his head in his left hand

was a letter addressed to

it is not often we are fired
with such enthusiasm without a moment's notice
we explained at last we have one reader of our advertisements

who knows where he can go to
for precision steel tubes now that the new Elizabethan
era is upon us the directors are considering changing
the name and fancy dressing accordingly

"Elbow you a trumpet handy?" is the title of a book published by Acles & Pollock
which will be sent to anybody who is seriously anxious to have help through tubes

RUFFLES AND FLINTLOCK
LTD.

OLDBURY
BIRMINGHAM

Better jellies more quickly this way

1



Nothing sticky to handle—
just tip the crystals out of
the packet.

2



Stir. They dissolve at once.

3



They always set—they're always
clear. And such delicious flavours.

STRAWBERRY
ORANGE
LEMON
RASPBERRY
GREENGAGE



**MONK
AND
GLASS**
Table jellies

Mood of
exasperated
inadequacy

A young wife of our acquaintance was given a brace of pheasants recently. Uncertain how long they should hang, she consulted an old and battered copy of Mrs. Beeton bequeathed by a great-aunt.



She read: "Anyone possessed of the instincts of gastronomical science can at once detect the right moment when a pheasant should be taken down."

This may not be helpful to the inexperienced, but it has the significance of discovered truth. And would a chapter of instruction in the matter — full of "if's" as it would necessarily be — prove more informative?

You may recall Stephen Leacock's summary of Directions for Growing Asparagus: "Having secured a suitable piece of ground, go out three years ago and plough or dig deeply."

A mood of exasperated inadequacy falls on anyone trying to explain how good food should be, or is, conjured. How is it, for example, that Heinz always make such good products?



The facts are clichés. "Only the finest produce procurable . . ." "Tried and tested recipes . . ." "Scrupulous attention to detail . . ."

Actually, Heinz went out much more than three years ago, secured suitable land, and ploughed deeply. And Heinz employ cooks who have the instincts of gastronomical science.

HEINZ 57

VOLUME CCXXIV

PUNCH ALMANACK for 1953



A CHRISTMAS POEM

IT is the very witching time of year;
The midnight cometh soon, at six o'clock,
Nor does the sedentary sun appear
Till, long before his time, the vagrant cock
Has loosed his crow, impatient of the hour.
Indeed, the night has crowded out the day,
Which, gaunt survivor of his summer's power,
Hastens by tea-time silently away,
To lean, reflective, on his tarnished shield,
Leaving the night possessor of the field.

The night, however, is no sombre king.
His victory is lit by monstrous flares;
The world is sheltered by his kindly wing.
And he a richer robe of velvet wears
Than is his wont in February frost,
When comes the day encroaching on his bounds,
And he, that sees the fight already lost,
Unleashes all his predatory hounds
To bay the night in fury unrestrained
Before the spring returns, and they are chained.

But in midwinter, when the night wins all,
He is magnanimous in all his pride.

This is the time for holly in the hall

And pinewood fires, with gleaming tongs beside,
For buttered crumpets and the rich brown toast;
Chicken, and turkey, when the purse allows.

Time to speak kindly to the passing ghost,
To press the cap of folly on the brows,
To mix unwanted liquors in the cup
And mingle ribaldry with washing-up.

The day's irrelevance is soon gone by,
And curtains drawn, and kettles on the hob.

Grave uncles sport the new and tasteless tie
Or hang the needless emblem on the fob;

Tall aunts bend kindly to the niece's wish,

And nephews have no fear of making noise.

The autumn nuts lie deeply in the dish,
And, like the autumn leaves, the new-bought toys
Lie thickly scattered on the floor, yet none
Cries out in rage at his untidy son.

For liberty has come with longest night,

And revelry has risen from despair.

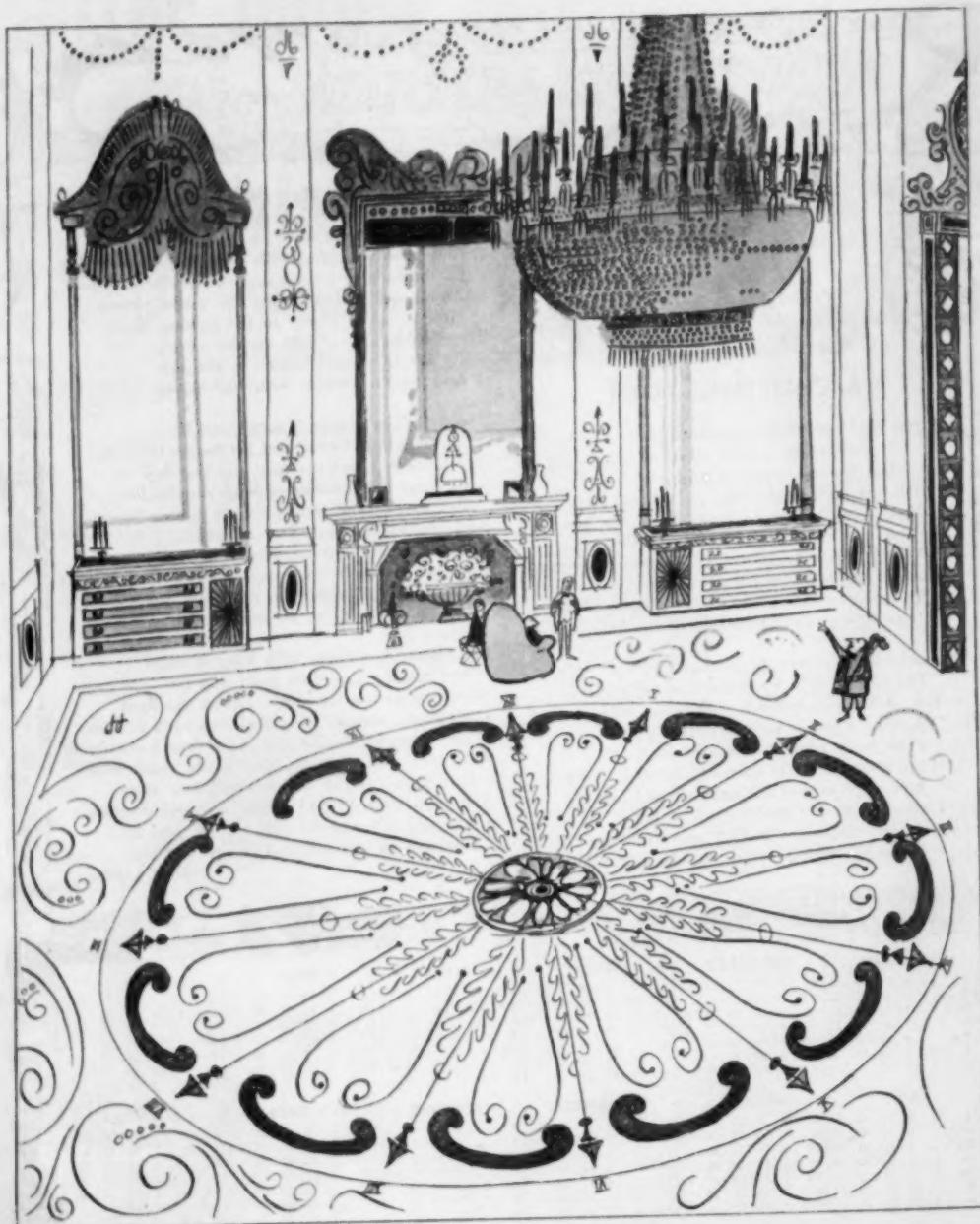
When spring was far away, and all the light
Was lost, and all the world was sunk in care,
They came with lanterns, and they knocked at doors
With doubtful messages, that made small sense

In times so full of sickness and foul wars,
And gold so scarce, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Yet they set out—so cold a road, and far—
For only in the darkness gleams the Star.

R. P. LISTER

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE |
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| M . . . 5, 12, 19, 26 | M . . . 2, 9, 16, 23 | M . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | M . . . 6, 13, 20, 27 | M . . . 4, 11, 18, 25 | M . . . 8, 15, 22, 29 |
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| We . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 | We . . . 5, 12, 19, 26 | We . . . 9, 16, 23, 30 | We . . . 7, 14, 21, 28 | We . . . 11, 18, 25 | We . . . 9, 16, 23, 30 |
| Th . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | Th . . . 6, 13, 20, 27 | Th . . . 10, 17, 24 | Th . . . 8, 15, 22, 29 | Th . . . 12, 19, 26 | Th . . . 10, 17, 24, 31 |
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"Anyone for clock golf?"

TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY . . .

WE watched the thin man heave the scooter onto the rack. The scarlet handle projected at least a foot into the compartment. Still swaying dangerously, the man edged it round so that the handle lay snugly along the back of the rack. One shining wheel, breaking through star-spangled paper, now stuck out instead.

The woman in the corner, who seemed to have more conscience than the rest of us, rose fussily and thumped at her hat box overhead. Two cockerels, their heads mercifully shrouded in brown paper, pointed stiff, threatening claws towards the communication cord. Four cases, a Christmas tree, an elegant wicker hamper with glossy red labels, and a string bag of wet Brussels sprouts jostled for position along the rest of the rack. Sighing, the thin man tugged the scooter out, sat down and put it between his knees.

"Bit packed, Christmas time!" said the cheerful young man next to him. He was nursing a parcel.

"Seasonable," replied the thin man. He felt in his back pocket for his lighter and apologized for grinding his elbow into my chest.

"Got a clock here," said the young man. "For me mum. Black marble. Like the old 'uns like."

"Ah!" nodded the thin man.

Warmed by this enthusiasm the clock-holder started to fumble with its wrappings. We all watched this pre-view of Christmas with interest. Even the two girls who were sharing a magazine, one slapping back the page as soon as the first had turned it over, stopped reading.

He was a tidy man. As he undid the string he hung it carefully round his neck. The ends swayed with the rhythm of the train, like seaweed in a leisurely tide.

He pushed back the top fold of paper and we all leaned forward. At this moment the window roared down to nothing. The gale hurled itself in with a spatter of rain, and the brown paper cracked open like a sail across the carriage.

"Strap's broke," said the thin man, striving to rise.

The two girls squealed and held their hats on.

The young man's parcel was seized with a fiendish life of its own, and flailed a hundred arms as he wrestled with it. The scooter fell viciously across my nylons, and an aged brown and white spaniel, a stranger to us all, emerged from under the seat.

The thin man stepped over our legs and peered down the top crack of the door. The strap lolled use-

lessly, but an inch of window frame could be seen. He picked at it gingerly as the gritty wind buffeted him, but his fingers skidded.

"Let me," yelled one of the girls above the din. "I can get my hand farther down."

"Get it pinched, more like," shouted the young man, dumping his parcel on the seat and joining the scrum by the window. "Here, let's lever it up a bit with my pencil. Stand clear!"

"Silly, playing with the window while the train's moving," the fussy



woman said to me in a confidential bellow. "They'd get not a penny of compensation if they lost an arm. It said in the paper how people will act silly holiday times. No need to be foolhardy, Christmas or no Christmas!"

The young man was crouching astride the spaniel. His silver pencil quivered as the window crept up, millimetre by millimetre.

"Grab it when I say!" he shouted to the thin man beside him.

With a scream a tunnel engulfed us. The window fell. The sulphurous smoke swirled round us, and we cowered back in our seats feeling small and rather hopeless.

"Try again in a minute!" the thin man bawled in my ear. "Never say die!"

"Do anything with Christmas in the air!" bellowed the young man, flexing his muscles.

Grey light began to filter into the carriage and they rose masterfully to their feet. The spaniel and scooter became inextricably mixed as we withdrew our legs.

"Ready!" The young man began his painful edging-up operation. The two girls made admiring noises and looked up under their lashes. Slowly the window rose.

"Now!" he snapped, like some tight-lipped captain sending off the fatal torpedo.

The thin man pounced and drew

it up bravely. The young man splayed his cold pink hands on the glass, and together they pushed it triumphantly home.

It was suddenly warm and quiet.

"Lovely!" we all said. "Well done!"

We smiled at each other and Christmas glowed very near.

The train began to slow down, and the guard came lurching along the corridor.

"All change!" he shouted. "All change!"

D. J. SAINT

6 6

CHARITY

Is the far good old days—or were they bad?—

There wasn't Income-tax, but men were found
Who gave the poor *one-tenth of all they had!* —

Absolute *saints!* . . . two shillings in the pound.

J. R.



"It's supposed to be automatic, but actually you have to press a button."



"God Rest You Merry Gentlemen by all means—but not before they've come out and put their lights on."

THE BALLAD OF BRADSHAW



"I WANT a train from Wick," I said, "to
Newport (Isle of Wight)."
"The 10.15," the guard replied, "Y, z."
"With c, presumably?" TC, I guess!"
"No buffet, I'm afraid, sir, and you Z."

I bought a single ticket, but I also bought a pup:
It Kk and refuses to pick up.
The station-master shouted "Go L."
M, it seems, a train Q.

The Aberdeen authorities were easy to amuse.
"The 4.16!" they chuckled. "It j."
"But this is Thur," I said, "not Tues." "We know,
sir," they concurred:
"It doesn't run at all P."

For reasons I cannot explain—they mystify me
still—
They run a * train to Pontefract D.
No RC, no N, or anything like that
(And by the way it runs Y).

Now Pontefract is better far than Selby (¶).
We suffered a derailment there. The fireman hurt
his skull.
The next train out of Selby (7.20 d)
To Oldham J and Burnley A) didn't meet my needs.

(I heard about another train—it proved to be a
myth—
To Chesterfield and Derby ¶.
It can't be done, or should I say the journey would
compare
With York to Barnsley f, m.)

A porter sidled up and whispered "Train to
Sheffield h,
With §. Better 'op in quick."

For notes, see p. 7

He said it was a G, but if it wasn't late
It might just make the 10.13 to Derby *a.*

The guard said "‡ and catch the 7.2.
It runs on y; it's a lucky day for you."
"The 7.2 *a.*, you mean?" "No, *p.* sir," he said.
"SC too—you spend the night in bed."

Too long to hang around. I'd had enough of fun
and games.
I took the 7.45 to Cheltenham Spa *g.*
(I beg your pardon, *B.*) When I woke up in the
dark
The Cheltenhams were far behind and this was
Bath *H.*

A colonel, pulling Bradshaw from a pocket of his
tweeds,
Said "b."
"That's Newport (Mon.)" I told him. "I want
Newport (Isle of Wight)."
"There's *F* to get you there to-night."

By *e* I thought the end was drawing near.
I reached Southampton *A, s.*
But lightning struck a sailing ship and split her
through the bows—
An inauspicious time to go *R!*

You notice from your Bradshaw that the steamer
from *K*
Sails frequently for Hythe. That wasn't any use
to me.
Instead, while I was waiting for the thunder to
subside,
I went to Portsmouth *t* for the *†*

And is this really Ryde? And is my weary journey
ended!
"Forgive us, *sir*," they answered, "but the
Newport train's *C.*"

- A** (Central)
- a.m.**
- B** (Lansdown)
- b** Passengers for
Newport change
at Bristol
(Temple Meads)
- C** suspended
- c** buffet car
- D** (Monkhill)
- d** via Leeds
- e** 9.14 on Sat.
- F** no connection
guaranteed
- f** (Court House)
- G** workmen's train
- g** (St. James)
- H** (Green Park)
- h** (Vic.)
- J** (Mamps)
- j** departs 4.2 on Tues.
- K** (Town Quay)
- K‡** stops to set down only
- L** by bus to Aberdeen
- M** From April 1st
- m** via Weston-super-Mare
- N** Pullman cars
- n** (Friargate)
- P** between May 1st
and August 3rd
- p** p.m.
- Q** departs at 4.16
- R** by packet boat to Cowes
- RC** Restaurant Car
- s** about one mile
from the Pier
- SA** Sleeping accom-
modation
- t** (Harbour)
- TC** Through Carriage
- v** arrives 12.50
- Y** 10 minutes earlier
on Sat.
- y** Fridays only
- Z** change at Inverness
- z** (night)
- *** third class only
- †** packet boat to
Ryde
- ‡** change at Rother-
ham
- §** limited accom-
modation
- ||** via Chapel-on-le-
Frith
- ¶** change for Hull



A CHRISTMAS PROBLEM

THE old problem of what to do with parents who still believe in Father Christmas was examined at a meeting of the Allied Cot Holders and Cap-Gunners Association in the Park recently; and while the meeting finally admitted its helplessness and decided to leave the matter over until next year, some forthright opinions were expressed by many of those present.

A member in wellington boots, sucking the top of his tricycle bell thoughtfully, stated that in his view the only method of dealing with this childish trait in otherwise extremely grown-up people was for them—the parents—to be told firmly yet tactfully of the facts. While no one would want to disillusion his/her father/mother by a sudden and badly-timed exposure of what had obviously become a strong belief, nevertheless (the

member said) the incredible naivete that made, for instance, a father maintain, with illustrations from his own childhood, that the only way for a reasonably-behaved child to be sure of a fair assortment of working toys was to write a letter to this Santa Claus person and post it up the chimney was not consistent with (and the speaker drew a deep breath and showed some emotion) the habitual distrust with which a father so often received statements on ear-washing, requests for increased allowances and so on.

When the cheering that greeted this statement had subsided, a member in full war-paint under his overcoat stood up. Although he had no actual proof, he said, going through the actions of scalping a paleface, that parents hung up their pillow-cases owing to the fact that they unfairly went to bed after their children, he had little doubt

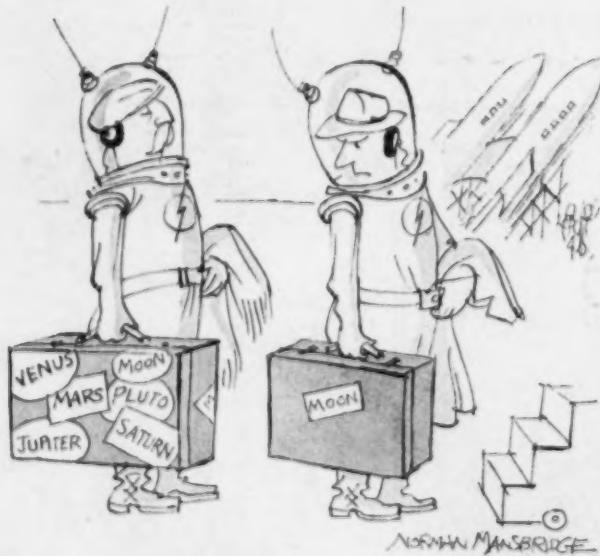
that they did. This character Father Christmas was some sort of Invisible Man. If one believed what one read in the comics—and there was no reason why one shouldn't, said the speaker . . .

Here the member was interrupted by loud interjections from a group of Tantrummers and Thumb-Suckers; and their spokesman rose to a point of order. While his Union did not differ fundamentally with what had been said, he felt that much of it had been too sweeping. He himself had last Christmas been almost certain that he had seen somebody who undoubtedly looked like Father Christmas. Nor had this been the results of continual propaganda from his parents. While he admitted that his thumb was just dropping from his mouth at the time, and he may have been nearly asleep, he felt that in all fairness parents might be held to have private knowledge of the existence of some super kind of fairy. Anyhow, he concluded, as long as the presents arrived, who cared *how* they arrived!

There was no doubt that this speech made an impression on waverers—mostly younger females in gaiters—but the chairman, emptying his six-shooter into the crowd, made the summing-up.

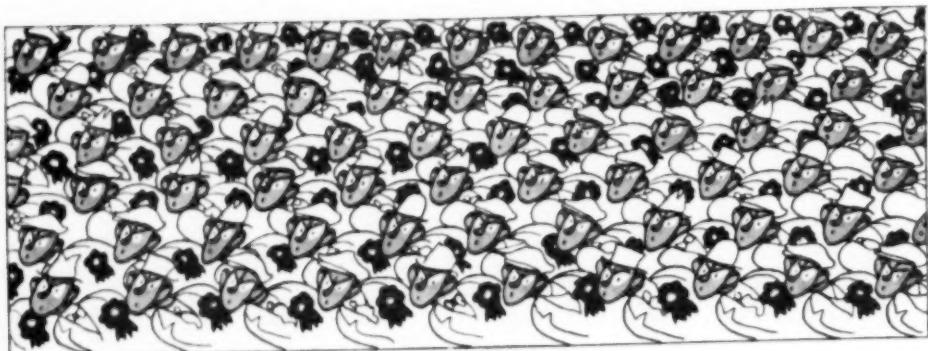
He discounted most of the last speaker's remarks. Impressions received while under the influence of hot milk were unreliable. It was sufficient that well-proved evidence such as the width of chimneys was overwhelmingly against the manifestation. It was, however, quite another thing officially and baldly to state—especially at this time—that "there's-no-such-thing-so-somehere!" Members taking this extreme course might look rather silly on Christmas morning. What, the chairman wound up, he suggested was that the meeting should accept the *status quo* for the coming year. It might even be time enough, he put forward, to postpone a decision until they, the members, had become parents themselves . . .

FERGUSON MACLAY

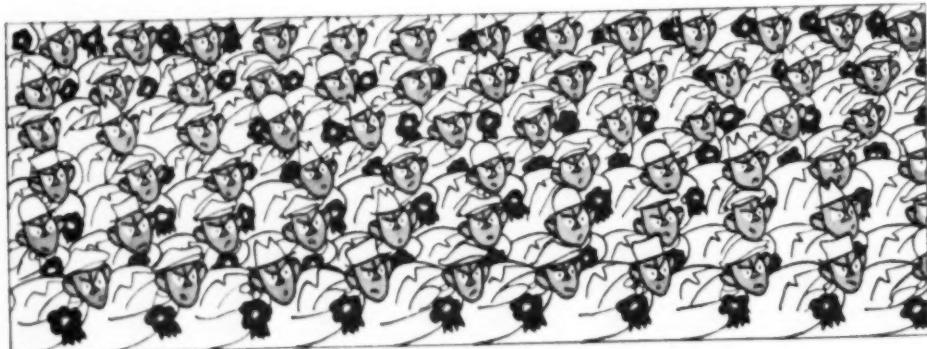




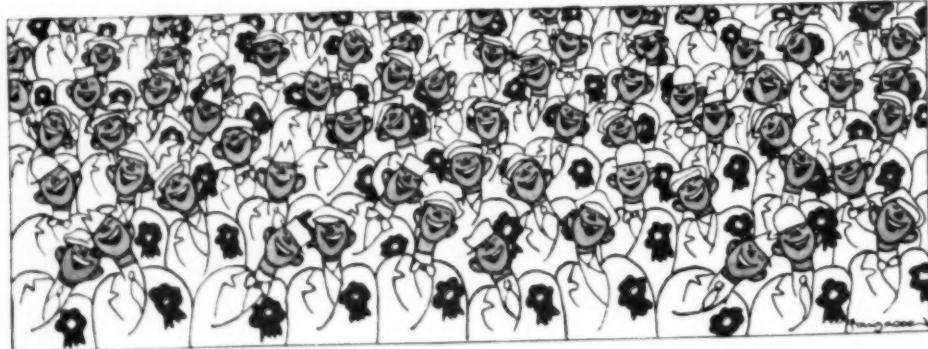
SATURDAY AFTERNOON'S ENJOYMENT



Home team attacks



Visiting team attacks



Policeman chases small dog off field

UP JAX, TWENNY-FOURTH

"STONE me," said the man, peering round the snack-bar door and flinching. "Got decorations in 'ere too, 'ave you?"

Jack, busy with the hot dinners in the back, glanced in.

"Yer," he admitted, jerking his head towards the solitary paper ball drawing-pinned to the ceiling. "You ask Walt, mate."

The man came in with a great gargling cough.

"Hoo," he said, patting himself lightly on the chest. "Manners."

"Ern," nodded Walt. "You want to 'ave seen old Jack puttin' it up. Dead funny. 'E got this chair and was stood on it, only 'e 'ad to stand on one leg to get the height. I'd 've swore blind it was Eros in Piccadilly only for that waistcoat."

"Go on," said Ern, grinding up a chair. "Dab 'and decorating, old Jack. Last year 'e 'ad snow, remember? Cotton wool on strings in the old window. Very, very nice it looked really. Personally myself, though, I'm a bit brassed off with decorating up. My old woman was on about it. Creating. Young Sylvie goes and smashed all them tinsel balls just now, playing around, and she reckoned it was me to blame leaving them on the dresser. 'Christmas Day to-morrow, too,' she says. I put me hat on."

"Ere y're now," announced Jack, flourishing the hot dinners. "Who says the old bangers? Yours, Walt?"

"Ah," said Walt. "Ta. You, Ern?"

"I got this fag on now," said Ern, pulling out a midday paper. "You carry on. I'll just 'ave a quick butcher's at the old linendraper. Last chance you'll get now till Satdy."

He shook out the sports page, easing the sauce bottle out of the way.

"What's up, then?" asked Walt, swirling the sauce like lava over his potatoes. "Get to-morrow's, won't you?"

"Christmas Day?" asked Ern,

glancing up. "No. Never any papers Christmas Day. Nor Boxing Day. Just the same."

"Don't be silly," said Walt, scraping the sauce bottle on the lid. "Course there's papers. I remember only last Christmas, going out for fags and I got papers. Up at old Smithy's. 'E was open, all right—ch, Jack?"

"Who's that?" asked Jack, straightening up again from some obscure business with cheesecakes under the counter. "Open?"

"Old Smithy," said Walt. "Up the top of the town."

"Oh," said Jack.

"Now wait a minute," said Ern, laying down the paper. "You take last 'Oiday Monday. You get a paper then?"

"Yes," said Walt. "Didn't you?"

"No you didn't," said Ern. "August nor Easter. When the banks're shut—no papers. He sat back again complacently."

"Now look," said Walt, presenting a forkful of slightly steaming sausage for inspection. "Any money you like, you get a paper every day except, wassit now? Yeras, Good Friday." He looked briefly at his fork, and suddenly ate the sausage.

"Eh?" exclaimed Ern. "Turn it up. It's Good Friday you get the early collection for the post, like Sundays."

"Friday's favourite for Christmas Day," said Jack. "No, Thursday. No, half a minute. Monday





"This one's so much quicker than the others."

is. Yes, then you get Tuesday Boxing Day, and you don't work from Saturday after dinner till Wednesday."

"And old Ern 'ere would reckon," said Walt, "you wouldn't get no papers for three days."

"Otherwise you want it Friday," went on Jack. "Same way. You get three days off in a run. I don't know about papers, though," he added diplomatically. "Anything you fancy for afters! There's the cheesecakes."

He held up a plate of them, the shredded coconut coiling Medusa-like on top.

Walt glanced at them indifferently. "No ta," he said. "Always

remind me of Lloyd George in a bit of a wind. Any of the old duff, 'ave you?"

"You fancy mince tart?" asked Jack. "'Ullo! Watch your kit."

The door had opened to reveal a slightly faded Father Christmas. The red gown was a little short and revealed the last six inches of a pair of grey flannel trousers.

"Cup of Rosy, Jack," said the newcomer, dumping an ostentatious sack by the counter. "On again in ten minutes. You don't get much let-up."

"Been down any good chimneys lately, Fred?" asked Walt earnestly, archly digging Ern in the ribs.

"Turn it up," said the Father

Christmas, unhooking his beard and hanging it on the hat-rack. "You get flaming kids at you all the time. That and 'aving to dodge old Arthur Green doing it for the Co-op, it's a proper game and a half, this caper."

"Nice cup for you, Fred," announced Jack, pushing it across. "Your big night to-night, eh?"

He winked at the others.

"Five sharp to-night they can keep this rig-out," said Fred moodily. "I done it as a favour, anyhow. 'Ere," he went on. "Woman come to me just now. She said 'Ere,' she said, 'my nipper's doing 'is nut to give you a letter.' 'Not much,' I says. 'Shakin' 'ands I'm paid for, walking round and noddin' all the time I'm paid for, but I'm not a perishin' postman. You try Arthur Green round Ormon Street way. If I was to take every note from all the kids, I'd get a sackful in no time. You tell 'im to shove it up the chimney,' I said."

"You're dead right there, too," said Walt. "Sauce."

"Well," said Fred. "She took it funny. Created, she did. Practically 'ad a crowd round with it. 'I'll take it up with Kerridge's,' she says. Then 'er nipper says 'Yerss,' he says, 'and don't you send me no crackers this time,' he says. 'Aero-planes, I want.'"

"Proper turn-out you had then, Fred," said Walt. "I bet the old sack gets a bit heavy after a bit, too."

"Ah, well," said Fred. "'Ave it dead steady to-morrow. Nice lay-in with the papers."

"Ha!" said Ern, roused from the midday at last. "'Ere that! Papers! Not to-morrow, mate. Christmas Day."

"Met Ern, 'ave you?" asked Walt. "Fred—Ern. On about papers all the time. Don't take no notice."

"Tmeechya," nodded Fred.

A woman's head poked in the door.

"Ernest!" she said, peremptorily. "Your dinner'll be up soon."

"Oh," said Ern. "Righto, Nell girl. Be arf a jiff."

The woman looked round and suddenly stiffened. "Ernest," she said again. "Here a minute."

Ern sighed and went out.

"Well," said Jack to Walt, "your afters. Mince tart. Very, very nice." He handed over the plate.

Ern came back, closing the door carefully.

"Excuse me," he said to Fred, "you step outside a minute, would you? My missus tells me you insulted 'e just now."

"Eh?" asked Fred, blankly. "Oh, stone me, was that 'er?"

"Peace on earth," said Jack, gazing up at the ceiling.

"You don't want to do your nut," said Ern. "She's off to do the dinner. I'm just taking Fred down the old Flower Pot. She said I'd got to 'ave a word with 'im. I reckon

it's worth a pint. Keep me off the decorations and all."

"Fair enough," said Fred, easing off his stool and briefly de-crumbing his crimson gown. "Just got to get me beard."

They trooped out.

"Mind 'ow you go," called Walt after them. "See old Ern doin' 'im for just that. Some of these old girls."

"My old woman just the same way," said Jack, wiping down vigorously. "Bloke one day only complained to Else about the cauli. Oo, she went up. Called me."

The paper ball swung slightly, hesitated, and dropped gently on to Walt's plate.

"Ay-ay!" said Walt, peering

at it. "What's this, then? I thought you said plum-duff wasn't on."

"Stone me," said Jack, flinging down the cloth. "Trouble I've 'ad with that."

"You've 'ad it now, mate," said Walt, gingerly handing the paper ball back and avoiding the drips of custard. "Tearin' down the decorations before Twelfth Night's just asking for it."

"One consolation, though," said Jack.

"What's that, then?" asked Walt, straightening his cap in the mirror.

"Fred's off at five," said Jack, "Least we won't be 'aving 'im down the chimuey."

ALAN HACKNEY

MERRY TELEVISION

GOOD King Wenceslas looked-in
On the feast of Stephen;
Sat he there with cheery grin,
Pleased, excited even;
Be the programme what it might
(He had lost the papers),
Laughter, sure, would reign to-night,
Jinks and jokes and capers!

Good King Wenceslas he had
First a spot of singing;
Sisters four, of aspect sad,
Set the welkin ringing;
How they mourned the broken vow!
How bewailed the weather!
And, to fit the picture, how
Close their heads together!

Next, King Wenceslas he saw
Cowboys round a shanty
(Guy inside was pro the Law,
Guys outside were anti);
Dust and boots and hooves and hats,
Shot and smoke and another—
And a team of acrobats
Balanced on each other.

Good King Wenceslas could see,
Very near, a saucer,
Type unknown, but thought to be
Dating back to Chaucer;

And a kettle freed from fur,
And a holeproof sock-toe,
And a play by Massinger,
And a play by Cocteau.

While he mused such sights upon,
Came a half-made tanker,
Came a Social History don
Shouting at a banker,
Came from out the Spanish Main
Seven wicked smugglers,
Came the acrobats again,
With a team of jugglers.

Now King Wenceslas he knew
How to fry a jersey,
How to knit an Irish stew,
How they built the Mersey,
Skilled he was to shoe a horse,
Or to paint the place up,
He had had a ballet course,
He could make his face up!

Good King Wenceslas he rose,
Yawning just a trifle;
Cold the fire and cold his toes,
He had seen an eyeful;
Not perhaps what you'd have planned,
Not for late December—
But it was Bohemia, and
Years ago, remember.

ANDE



"I shouldn't eat that, sir—it's just possible that it's part of the ceiling."

JUST AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

COULD you give me a hint of what the Christmas presents you have bought for your family, Miss la Fleur? My readers, you know, are always terribly interested in such things when they concern a film-star."

"Well—would you say that it's a secret, because I don't want to spoil the surprise for my family?"

"Yes, that's splendid. I'll just make a note—though famous on screen, still believes in surprise presents; simple things, because she's simple person. That O.K.?"

"Oh, yes. I'm very simple."

"Good. It'll be an old-fashioned

Christmas for you, won't it? Holly, mistletoe, tree, and so on!"

"Yes."

"And you're hoping for a white Christmas?"

"Oh, yes. I love the snow."

"You love the clear, crisp air of a frosty morning, when the children's voices ring across the fields and lanes, and your warm, beating heart responds with all the love of eternal woman for innocent childhood."

"Yes."

"And you adore the long, clear nights when you sit with your loved ones before the fire,

telling ghost stories, cracking nuts, playing consequences."

"Yes."

"And you'll play with the children—hunt the thimble, oranges and lemons, hide and seek; all the old traditional games, the simple games."

"Yes, I'm very simple."

"I've got that. And you'll sing carols and wear a paper hat!"

"Oh, yes."

"Miss la Fleur, though noted for her unerring fashion-sense, loves to frolic like a child in a paper hat. How's that?"

"Fine."

"Actually you love to wear your old clothes, don't you, Miss la Fleur?"

"Oh, yes. There's nothing I like better than to get into my old clothes."

"You really hate having to wear dreary Paris models, don't you?"

"Yes. One gets so sick of mink."

"Naturally. And for the country in an English winter you feel there's nothing like stout shoes and warm woollens, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's enough, I think. I won't keep you any longer, or you'll miss your train. I hope you'll have a very happy Christmas."

"Thank you. Paris will be quite enjoyable, I think."

MARJORIE RIDDELL

• •

AFTERMATH

BY the twelfth day of Christmas
Back to normality—
Save for Partridge in a puce tie
Two partners putting
Three chars scrubbing
Four typists tapping
Five clerks scribbling
Six girls chatting
Seven postmen rapping
Eight phones ringing
Nine windows rattling
Ten stairs creaking
Eleven teacups slopping
Twelve clients waiting . . .
—And old Partridge in a puce tie.

MARK BEVAN



"Okay, Mr. Jackson."



THE FIRE AT HAGSTRODE PRIORS

MY brother Robert, now in Australia, was a great collector of marsupials, for which he had, from a very early age, a quite unusual flair. His twin sister, Octavia, always the more reserved character of the two despite the genuine bonds of sympathy between them, went in more for the foraminifera. My younger sister, Lucilla, the baby of the family and the darling of indulgent parents, was given a white okapi on her twelfth birthday, and thereafter devoted herself entirely to the breeding and domestication of these rare but beautiful creatures. I collected snakes.

"The place will be yours," my mother used to say, "to divide between you after I am gone." (My father had died suddenly in 1910, after being chased round the home paddock by Lucilla's cow Ch. Winston Snowdrop of Hagstrode.) "For now, you know your rooms are your own, and the south conservatory, Robert, is yours, and Lucilla, you have the stables and paddocks. But remember we owe it to your father to maintain our position in the county, and his friends must feel they are free to visit us as they used to do. And your Uncle Carlton is not to be disturbed, as I am sure you know very well your dear father would have wished."

Uncle Carlton was, of all our many relations, the greatest favourite with us children. We had never

actually seen him (he lived alone with his collection in the east wing), but he remembered our birthdays with drafts drawn, in his fine, spidery hand, on his bankers in London; and he represented for all of us, and for myself, perhaps, most of all, what was best in the history of Hagstrode. It was Uncle Carlton who had brought back Lucilla's first okapi from Africa, where he had been laying the foundations of his own collection; and he directly represented (though younger than my father) a tradition which went back through my grandfather, who had nineteen children and collected prehistoric megaliths in the South Park, to my great-great-grandfather, who had originally formed the Hagstrode estate from a collection of common lands unrivalled even among his contemporaries.

The steady expansion of Uncle Carlton's collection was marked by the progressive boarding-up of windows along the east wing; but although he had a large correspondence and occasional (and sometimes curious) visitors, his collection never received the public recognition which was its due, nor was it ever adequately catalogued. Several attempts were in fact made to catalogue it, but most ended in the early departure of the cataloguer and one (the matter attracted some attention at the time, but was fortunately hushed up) in his complete disappearance.



"H'm, pretty-pretty."

As it turned out, my mother need not have worried; she herself was to survive Hagstrode. But she could have no inkling of this when, on that quiet summer evening, she went off down the long east avenue in the open victoria with Jonathan on the box and Paracelsus, a beautiful twelve-year-old okapi gelding standing fully fifteen hands, between the shafts. Once a year, in the summer, she visited her sister, our Aunt Emilia, who had for some time lived with her collection of coyotes in the Dower House but had later moved to a house in the north, whose grounds of fifteen hundred acres offered her greater scope for the pursuit of her interests. We came out on to the terrace to see her off; Lucilla, who had attended personally to the harnessing of Paracelsus, in the breeches and gaiters which were now her

almost invariable wear; Robert in open-necked shirt, dungarees and bluchers; Octavia in her white surgical coat and rubber gloves; and myself in the fourteenth-century chain-mail which, originally taken from among the trophies in the long gallery, I had long since adopted as my working dress.

The evening was warm and still, and the leaves hung lifeless on the great beeches of the east avenue; but there was a mutter of thunder in the far west, and an unusual restlessness, as we all later agreed, observable among our respective charges. Two of Robert's wallabies, usually so peaceful, had fallen out and fought savagely over their evening feed. An old puff-adder, that lived in the wainscot under my bed, had suddenly emerged and made repeated efforts to join the water-snakes in my wash-basin.

Even the impeccable Paracelsus had refused the bit; and from the east wing, instead of the placid and rather plaintive notes usual at that hour of the evening, there came a curious muttering, punctuated at intervals by an eerie cry, that rose suddenly almost to a scream and was as suddenly hushed.

The sky was overcast by sunset, and the storm broke in the first darkness and raged with extraordinary violence for well over an hour. Three of the elms in the west avenue were down before the house itself was first struck at the extreme end of the west wing. The stables were fortunately well separated from the main block, and the okapis throughout showed a steadiness totally unexpected in creatures of their notorious sensibility; but the south conservatory suffered early damage, and I shall never forget the

sight, seen under the flicker of almost continuous lightning, of Robert, the long coo-ees of the metatheria-handler scarcely audible above the tumult of the storm, herding his leaping and ambling charges down the lime walk towards the Dower House, where they were all, in due course, safely housed in Aunt Emilia's coyote kennels.

Octavia, realizing the comparative immobility of her charges, had long accustomed them to regular drill in the use of prepared escape apparatus; and they came down a spiral chute, not unlike those seen at fairs, in their living-trays, which were quickly loaded into the special van designed to receive them and brought to the foot of the chute by Miss Bates, Octavia's assistant, at the first sign of danger.

My own task was less easy. The western end of the house had now

been struck more than once and was burning fiercely. Although the fire would take some time to reach the central block, evacuation was now obviously inevitable; and, unlike the more careful Octavia, I had no pre-arranged scheme. My pets did not, of course, lack mobility; indeed, with the exception of the water-snakes, the opposite was the case. But once dispersed many of them would be almost impossible to recapture; I had no skilled assistance; and they did not readily admit of unskilled handling, even if volunteers could be found.

That the device I ultimately hit upon was adequate is, I think, sufficiently vouched for by the fact that in the upshot not a life was lost. I fixed a length of canvas fire-hose (Hagstrode was fully equipped with hoses, though owing to the lack of any adequate water-supply it was

unfortunately impossible to bring them into use) to a circular hole in my door and led it downstairs to the great hall, where a number of barrels, which I had had brought up from the cellar, stood in readiness. I then instructed the housemaid (who behaved admirably throughout) to ring their dinner-bell on the landing, and released my charges in homogeneous sets, beginning with my beloved hamadryads. As I had anticipated, the creatures shot through the hole and, finding themselves unable to turn, continued down the pipe till they were fed into the waiting barrels and shut down to await removal to safer quarters. I carried the wash-basin myself.

The scene, when I accompanied the last of the barrels out on to the terrace, was one I shall not easily forget. The whole of the west wing was now a sheet of flame, and the upper floors of the central block were also well alight. The great sweep of grass between the east and west avenues, where only the week before the county agricultural show had been held, was now full of a mass of tenantry, domestic and domestic animals, gazing, in nearly all cases open-mouthed, at the blazing building.

It was as I came down the main steps to join them that they began to recede from me, at first slowly and then, turning their backs, in indiscriminate panic. Left there standing in the red glare of the fire, I turned back towards the house and perceived at once the cause of their dismay. The great doors of the east wing, which I had never before seen open, stood wide, and a tall, hideously ugly man (even in this light the likeness to my brother Robert was unmistakable), wearing a long beard and a flowered silk dressing-gown, was advancing slowly across the grass. Behind him, a long shadowy flood of striped and spotted bodies, with twitching tails and bright, upturned eyes, moved stealthily. Thinking this no time for family reunions, I too made my way quickly westward, as Uncle Carlton, at the head of his collection, moved steadily down towards the great stone circles of the South Park.

P. M. HUBBARD



"Nonsense, of course you can! Just lift the receiver, listen for the dialling tone, dial 999, and when the speaker answers . . ."



"It's a dreadful party, George—I'm glad now we weren't invited."



NOËL! NOËL!

"COME in, Crole, and sit down. This is going to be a long business, I'm afraid."

"Something about the balance, sir?"

"No, but of course it's most unfortunate that it should come just now, when we've quite enough to do as it is. It's a circular from Head Office, about Christmas. They've headed it 'Noël! Noël!' Most unusual affair."

"What do they——"

"I'll just run through the main points. They start off by saying that competition among the banks is becoming increasingly keen, and that a point has been reached at which it may be necessary, in order to retain our present customers and, if possible, to attract new business, to adopt methods that might have been thought unconventional a few years ago.

"The circular then goes on: 'As an experiment, therefore, it has been decided to inaugurate a Christmas Good Will Week, commencing on Wednesday, the 17th instant, during which customers at all our branches will be received in a spirit of hearty and boisterous good fellowship in keeping with the season.'"

"What exactly do they want us to do, Mr. Furman?"

"It affects all members of the staff who come into contact with the public. As a preliminary measure, the management, securities clerk or clerks, and all cashiers, are requested to make themselves thoroughly familiar with Chapters 28-30 of *The Pickwick Papers*, dealing with Christmas festivities at Dingley Dell. Application for copies of the book, in the proportion of one to every three of the staff concerned, should be made to Stationery Department forthwith, using form 102A—You might see to that—A return is to be made on the enclosed form CGWW4 of members of the staff to whom copies of the book are issued. Initials should be inserted in the columns headed 'Received,' 'Read

and understood' and 'Returned,' but for column 1 —'Issued'—a neat tick will suffice."

"Are we supposed to read it in our own time, do you think?"

"I take it so—certainly."

"Carker's going to turn nasty, I'm afraid. You remember the time I asked him to take the PAYE home?"

"Well, take him off the counter for a couple of hours and let Miss Joyce go on."

"Yes, but then the other cashiers'll go up in the air—I mean seeing Carker lounging around reading, while they're hard at it——"

"Then you'll just have to take a strong line with Carker. Anyway, all this is a mere nothing. Wait till you see 'Exclamations of Good Will.' Now, where were we? Oh yes—'Cashiers.' It is desirable that during Christmas Good Will Week the counter should be manned by fresh-complexioned cashiers of bluff and open-hearted appearance and of a minimum weight of approximately twelve stone. Many branches will be unable to attain this ideal, but it is pointed out that officials of spare build, by standing well back on the heels, slightly bending the knees, and relaxing the muscles of the diaphragm, may do much to convey an impression of seasonable corpulence."

"Carker——"

"Attention is drawn to the fact that responsibility for the success of Christmas Good Will Week must necessarily rest mainly with the cashiers, and the utmost importance is attached to the assumption by them of a suitable demeanour during this critical period. In general, the cashiers will aim at an air of suppressed merriment. Nothing is to be gained by mechanical outbursts of forced hilarity, but a smile should never be far from the lips. Experiments made at Head Office under the supervision of the Chief General Manager have shown that the gesture of bringing the hands smartly together with a

brisk massaging movement is extremely effective in creating the precise atmosphere at which we aim, particularly when accompanied by a rollicking laugh *unforced*. Cashiers are asked to make themselves familiar with this gesture, and to employ it frequently during the week. No hard and fast rules can be laid down as to timing, but great care must be exercised so as to avoid a simultaneous execution of the manoeuvre by all cashiers. This would tend to give an unhappy impression of artificiality, particularly at the larger branches."

"You know, Mr. Furman, I really can't see Carker——"

"*"Exclamations of Good Will.* During Christmas Good Will Week, the use of the expression 'Compliments of the Season' is strictly forbidden. Fifteen alternative greetings of a more forcible type, graded according to emotional content are set out in Appendix A, and no customer should be allowed to leave the bank without having at least one of these addressed to him. The utmost care must be taken in the choice of appropriate greetings for different



customers. For example, in refusing to cash a customer's cheque for lack of sufficient funds, a cashier should clearly not use No. 14—"May every blessing and good fortune, etc., etc., " delivered in a husky voice, with a hand resting on each of the customer's shoulders. No. 1—"A very happy Christmas to you!", with a quick handshake, or No. 2—"The very best wishes for a happy Christmas!", with a prolonged handshake, would be more fitting in such a case."

"Well, honestly, Mr. Furman, I've never——"

"My dear chap, this is nothing! Absolutely nothing! They've got a whole section on these greetings alone, and then there's a lot more

about handshakes and various gestures to go with them. No. 1, 'quick handshake,' No. 2, 'prolonged handshake,' Nos. 3 to 6, 'very hearty and prolonged handshake and throat-clearing as though overcome by emotion,' and so on and so on. No. 15's a terrific affair: 'May heaven send, etc., etc., ' with a long handshake, 'both the customer's hands to be clasped and shaken briskly during the enunciation of the greeting, and the knuckles drawn quickly across the eyes at the moment of departure.'"

"You know, sir, I'm afraid this is going to mean a lot of activity in Errors in Cash account. Take a chap like Carker, now—none too

accurate at the best of times. Mrs. Bollington comes in, say. Well, he's got to do this hand-clapping business and the rollicking laugh, relax his diaphragm and so on, get through, say, greeting No. 14, remember to give her new notes, get her statement, see that she signs her dividend warrants, and finally, reach over the counter and grab her hands for greeting No. 15. Well, you know, it's all just going to be too much for him. He's a very gloomy sort of fellow, and this rollicking laugh alone——"

"I'm sorry, Crole, but this is no time for nursing weaklings. He'll just have to get through as best he can. Now, first, I want you to get me a list of all customers with balances of over £1,000. I've not got time to go into it now, but they're each to be given a propelling pencil. You'll have to apply to Stationery Department for those. Then I want you to see the cashiers, put them through this rollicking laugh business and tell them about standing well back on the heels and so forth—at any rate, tell Carker and Payne: the others should be all right. What d'you think?"

"I'm not too sure about the complexions, Mr. Furman. Danby and Lunt——"

"Well, we can't do much about that, but you might see that the heat's turned up a bit on the seventeenth. That'll be a help. And just take Appendix A, will you, and get Miss Beale to do six copies and give one to each cashier. Who's the fattest ledger-clerk?"

"I think Pollen——"

"I'll want him on Christmas Eve, for the Wassail Bowl."

"The Wassail Bowl!"

"There's to be a party after we close on the twenty-fourth. The Assistant General Manager's coming—he's going to distribute these pencils—and they say he'll 'join an informal gathering round the Wassail Bowl (see Chap. 28) and lead customers and staff in carol-singing.' You'd better look out for him. He can be very nasty indeed."

"Yes, I know, Mr. Furman. Is that everything, then?"

T. S. WATT





"Heavens! I forgot to get any prizes."



FALLEN ARCHES

A vague memory of many exciting and sensitive tales read in the past few years. The title seems to have a strong flavour of the allegorical—or can it be the title of something else?

FUNICULI FUNICULA

I KNEW him at once. Even wincing under a blow that dented my skull as a penny thrown from a bridge dents a river, I recognized the apelike ears, the hairy arms tattooed with vine-leaves, the button in the greasy lapel that said "Call me Mr. Finzetti or else . . ."

I sprawled down the age-worn steps and the water of the Canale della Guidecca lapped hysterically just below. From San Giorgio Maggiore singing rose into the air like a spire. A gondolier pointed me out to his load of goggling tourists as he poled past. At Florian's, Semple and Little Eyolf junior would be sipping champagne cocktails and reminding each other and the waiter that Napoleon called the Piazza San Marco "the finest drawing-room in Europe."

I could see him outlined against the sky. He was writing something in the blue notebook that Monica-Ann had paid so much of her youth to find. I hauled myself to my knees and played the ace I still had up my sleeve. The sten crumpled him as my sleeve split. At the shots, the pigeons whirled like chaff circling a waste-pipe. One or two householders drew their shutters with the immemorial caution of the East, which begins at Venice and not, as they will tell you at the Embassy, in Trieste. I took the notebook and left him lying there, looking as though all the things he had been chasing throughout his life had suddenly caught up with him. I reeled off towards the vaporetto and safety.

DREAMING SPIRES

It had all begun in Oxford. I was living in digs and working like yeast to get into Cambridge. One morning my head was aching with algebra and I wandered out to Carfax to watch the grey sleet bouncing from the buildings and listen to the yelps of undergraduates as they biked back from lectures. A woman don skidded and a young man bent forward to heave her up. Though my muscles rippled only shallowly in comparison with his, I joined my shoulder to his. The effort made a bond between us and from that time on we became inseparable as light and shade.

Once, eating buttered toast in the Tudor Tearooms, Walter confided to me that his deepest ambition was to serve his country by making some discovery in physics that would enable Britain to use her vast reserves of chalk for the production of power. I said it sounded a chemical problem; but he complained that he found chemistry difficult.

"I can never bend glass tubing into the right shape, Seth," he said.

Monica-Ann was at the next table, construing *Tartarin de Tarascon* with a friend. She leant across

to us and whispered that she happened to know—the actual expression she used was a little bird had told her—of a formula for so rearranging the atoms in the calcium carbonate molecule that heat was generated. She added that the formula was contained in a blue notebook. It was many months before we realized that she was as desperate as we were to lay hands on it.

J'AI DE BON TABAC DANS MA TABATIÈRE

As I made my way through the Venetian back-streets my thoughts turned to the curious episode that had occurred in Paris. Walter and I had been idling along the Quai Voltaire when Monica-Ann had run after us and called us back to be introduced to Mrs. Hoyle. She was walking sturdily, darting sharp little glances from her lizard eyes at Semple, who walked beside her with a fawning slink that I hated to see in a man. We stood in an uneasy group, chatting about the Salon, the Académie Française, the debate in the Senate on the Law of February 24.

I was smoking a rancid cigar that I had been given by an Arab who liked to pose as something out of Hemingway. Semple urged me to try his own tobacconist. "Tell him I've sent you to try his wares," he said. Embarrassed, I objected that I did





"I wonder if you can help me—I've been ordered a complete rest."

not know the French for "wares" and was uncertain of the French for "try." Mrs. Hoyle explained that he knew English. There was something about her accent that puzzled me, in the way that you are puzzled by the treble of a tune when you can remember only the bass. Later I learned that, while her father's family had settled in Ohio when they left Gothland, her mother came from Brixton.

The tobacconist lived in a slatternly street near the Tour Jacques. He was a puny creature, with red-rimmed pince-nez that accentuated the watery blueness of his eyes. When I gave him the message he beckoned me behind the counter. The air was close and I could not get my eyes accustomed to the way that the darkness seemed at once localized and diffused. While I was searching for my bearings I felt a prick. The walls seemed to close in on me, then expand radiantly into the distance. As I went under I heard Mrs. Hoyle say "Finzetti is looking forward to seeing him. It should be an interesting conversation."

MY HAIRT'S I' THE HIELANDS

I gained the station without interference and took a slow, local train; they would be looking for me on

one of the custom-built international express. I remembered what had happened shortly after the Department took us under its wing.

"They do choose the damnedest places for rendezvous," Walter had said as we huddled by the statue of Dean Hook in the City Square of Leeds. It was a Sunday afternoon, dun and chill as charity. We had been instructed not to shave, wash or eat. We were to create an illusion of seediness, of life barely existing in the scum at the edge of the pond. The man who was to join us would be even seedier. He would be carrying a copy of *The Quarterly Review* and he would pick a quarrel with Walter about whippets.

I hardly noticed the car when it passed the first time. Then it came round again. It had a foreign look and seemed to be crammed with men in turbans. As it drew level with us, one of the tyres began to deflate and I smelled the sweet acridity of chloroform.

I can just remember saying to Walter "This is it," and his replying "What is?" when I passed out.

Acons later the grey mist swirled before my heavy eyelids, coagulated, decoagulated and parted solemnly, like the curtains of a toy theatre. I found myself tightly strapped on to a truckle bed in what looked

like a Caithness shepherd's hut. Through a broken window I could see the moon edging diffidently over Nose Head and in my nostrils was the heart-breaking rankness of the sea. There was no sign of Walter, unless he were in the hamper that stood by the opposite wall. From beyond a door that was shapeless with age came the sound of guttural voices arguing.

I shouted; the voices stopped, to be replaced by a guttural breathlessness. Then I heard lounging footsteps, the lock screamed like a macaw and in came the woman I feared more than I had ever feared anything on earth. She held the lamp high and its flickering flickers made her look monolithic, Lilith-like.

"I see you have not forgotten me," she purred—as if I could ever have forgotten Lucretia Hoyle.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE ROME

It was not until the train was crossing Emilia that I dared sigh with relief. The passengers on either side of me clutched their newspapers angrily; but I felt free, and freedom always means a certain detachment towards the rights of others. My immediate destination was Rome. After that . . . well, it would depend on Semple. I wondered whether Finzetti had been working alone. In a sense, that kind of man is always alone. He is as solitary and unloved as a mamba. He might, however, find temporary allies, other refugees

from security whose steps would shuffle in time with his as far as the next corner in the beaten road.

The night fell softly, like black snow. Despite the hardness of the wooden seats I slept well. I woke up with a start as the train came to a grinding stop. Lanterns flashed outside and brisk Italian voices chattered anxiously. I looked at my watch and calculated that we ought to be somewhere on the borders of Umbria and Latium. I felt a leaden chill when I realized that we were crossing the Swiss frontier at Chiasso. Semple had worked fast.

EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK

The fear that choked my gullet was unnecessary. The Customs was perfunctory and the notebook remained safely between my money-belt and my bullet-proof vest. Soon the train was luggering itself across Ticino. By morning it had reached Uri. By the next morning it was not far off Basle. When we drew up to the platform I pretended to leave the carriage for a stroll. I waited until nobody seemed to be looking my way and then darted behind a trainload of mules on their way to the manoeuvres. Then I swung myself on to the Flensburg express. As it moved I saw the window of my old compartment splinter. I had only just been in time.

The express was half-empty and I had no difficulty in getting a seat. Relaxed and happy, I leant back and watched the landscape of Baden inexplicably change to that of the upper Danube valley. When we swung south through Innsbruck I began to have suspicions. At Bolzano a chattering crowd with baggage labelled "Venice" entered and my suspicions were confirmed. Some power, less supernatural and probably less benevolent than destiny, was taking a hand in my affairs.

THE LION OF ST. MARK

I entered the Piazza San Marco by the Torre dell'Orologio. I could see Semple and Little Eyolf junior at their usual table. With them sat Walter, a certain rigidity of pose suggesting that he was a prisoner. At the next table sat Monica-Ann and Mrs. Hoyle. Scattered about were the tobacconist from Paris, some men in turbans from Leeds, a waitress from the Tudor Tearooms, the Arab and Finzetti, looking pale and uninteresting. I strolled across, wondering whether I should end the day at the bottom of a canal. I did not much care. Life had run too fast for me and I was scorched by its breath.

Walter seemed to be trying to signal to me; but I was beyond playing the game with any subtlety. The time to be subtle is at the beginning, not the end. I took the notebook from my pocket and lobbed it among the tables. There was a harsh scramble. In the confusion Walter slipped away and walked down to the Bacino di San Marco by my side.

"It's all right," I said dully. "I looked at the formula in the train. It's nothing to do with chalk. It's only something about plutonium."

Underfoot, the pigeons clattered and scurried for corn, indifferent and superb. R. G. G. PRICE



"What do you Ministry blokes know about farm stock?"

HE IS WORLD'S FUNNIEST WRITER BUT WORLD HAS NEVER HEARD OF HIM

THE writings of J. K. WINDER-THOMPSON are reputed to be so funny that editorial staffs who handle them sometimes fall backwards off their stools and compositors become temporarily too convulsed to set up the type of his articles.

YET ACCORDING TO THE CLAIMS MADE BY MR. F. L. COOT, A 17-A-WEEK CIVIL SERVANT EMPLOYED BY THE MINISTRY OF PENSIONS, PRACTICALLY NO MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, APART FROM ONE OR TWO CLOSE RELATIONS AND PERSONAL FRIENDS, EVER READS ANYTHING THAT J. K. WINDER-THOMPSON WRITES

Why is this?

★ Rubber bands

LAST week, in the hopes of discovering the answer to this question, I interviewed Mr. Coot in his neat front parlour hung with some of the choicest fruits of the fifty-three-year-old filing clerk's unusual hobby—the collecting of rubber bands.

"Come into the other room, it's quieter," were the unexpected opening words of balding Mr. Coot who first became interested in J. K. Winder-Thompson and other "readerless writers," as he calls them, when he inadvertently got locked from Saturday to Monday in the Reading Room of the Public Library at Andover Junction.

Mr. Coot told officials at the time that he failed to notice what o'clock it was through being preoccupied over the disappearance of an eel from his shopping-bag.

Later the eel was found abandoned at Tetbury, Glos.

★ Lazier and lazier

"With all reading matter," Mr. Coot told me when we had settled

By
**The man who
became his
only admirer
owing to an
error over an
eel**

ourselves as comfortably as possible in the little place where this spare-time student of literature keeps gas capes after they have gone stiff, "there is a strong element of risk.

"There is no infallible way of telling in advance whether one is going to be glad that one has read something or sorry.

"THE PUBLIC TO-DAY," MAINTAINED MR. COOT (WHO ADMITS THAT HE ENJOYS AN OCCASIONAL CUP OF CAMOMILE TEA), "IS GETTING LAZIER AND LAZIER AND LESS AND LESS INCLINED TO TAKE THE RISK OF READING.

"With periodicals which provide attractive alternatives to reading matter the public's reluctance to read is intensified, and with humorous papers such as Winder-Thompson works for, which contain illustrated jokes, its resistance," Mr. Coot asserted with a wave of his chubby hand towards a bakelite dwarf in the opposite garden, "is simply terrific."

★ "Why is this? I ventured"

"Why is this?" I ventured.

"Well," replied Mr. Coot, who must be getting on for 5 ft. 8 in. in his snug-fitting socks, "for one

TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME ON EITHER SIDE OF THE IRON CURTAIN

thing readers of humorous papers have conditioned themselves to believe that once they have faced up to the illustrated jokes they have done as much as can be expected of them and are free to get on with something else—television for instance.

"AS A POINT OF INTEREST EXPERTS HAVE PROVED THAT IT IS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR A PERSON NOT TO READ THE WRITING UNDER AN ILLUSTRATED JOKE ONCE IT HAS COME INTO HIS LINE OF VISION.

"On the other hand the exercise of not reading humorous reading matter comes quite naturally to nearly everyone."

★ Complain bitterly

"In that case," I demanded with a twinkle (I think), "would not Editors of humorous papers be well advised to leave the reading matter out?"

"Oh, dear me, no!" answered Mr. Coot—this quiet unassuming man keeps himself needle fit with a nightly game of French cricket. "The public would complain bitterly, according to how it interpreted its emotions, that it had not had its moneysworth or that it had insufficient time to re-orientate itself between what it calls the 'cartoons' or in extreme cases, the 'photos.'"

★ Baffled and indignant

"But the real truth as I see it," added Mr. Coot, who is a family man

The Astounding Case of JOHN KILVAINE WINDER-THOMPSON

with several children, "is that with long-established periodicals the public comes to get fond of the letterpress in the way it comes to get fond of old wallpaper or anything else which forms a constant, familiar, practically unnoticed accompaniment to what I may perhaps be pardoned for calling the strident cacophony of contemporary events.

"For many people the mere act of reading would be like breaking a spell."

"IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME JUST VISUALIZE ANY WELL-KNOWN PAPER WITH THE PARTS YOU NEVER READ REMOVED AND DARE TO TELL ME THAT YOU DO NOT FEEL BAFFLED AND INDIGNANT."

★ Upsetting experience

"And there's another thing," continued this sprightly Civil Servant who at one time was compelled to work in a Reptile House, "it is a far more upsetting experience for a man to read a humorous article and not be amused than it is for a man to read an improving article and not feel improved.

"PEOPLE WHO GET STUCK OVER SERIOUS READING MATTER ARE OFTEN PREPARED TO ADMIT THAT IT MAY BE THE FAULT OF THEIR UPBRINGING, BUT THERE IS NO CONTEMPT GREATER THAN THE CONTEMPT FELT BY READERS FOR THE WRITERS OF FUNNY ARTICLES WHICH FAIL TO STRIKE THEM AS FUNNY."

"Readers in this position feel vexed, bitter, cheated, outraged, and quietly confident that they could have turned out superior stuff in the Nursery School."

"This is because all readers know that their idea of fun is the right one."

★ His right spectacles

"But surely," I interposed, fingering the neat bow I invariably affect, "the public realizes that it can rely on Winder-Thompson and one or two others to 'deliver the goods' every time?"

"But it can't," came the swift retort; "even J.K. at his best rarely hits the jack-pot more than three times out of

five, and please to remember the public has never heard of J. K. Winder-Thompson or any other humorous writer except L. V. Meadows, who is of course a sword swallower first and foremost.

"Even supposing," continued Mr. Coot, who enjoys a weekly visit to his local cinema without Mrs. Coot, "something were to occur in the first place to make a member of the public take the plunge and begin reading an article, and supposing he liked it enough to go on to the end and still liked it then, and supposing the author's name was clearly visible and the member of the public noticed it and succeeded in committing it to memory, and supposing he happened to come across a further example of that author's work another time and had nothing else on hand for the next five minutes and his right spectacles in the room with him, well," said Mr. Coot with a quick glance at the book-case which spoke volumes, "he might—I say he might decide to read that author a second time.

"But how often, if ever," demanded Mr. Coot, baring his teeth in an unintentional snarl, "are all these conditions likely to be fulfilled?"

★ Thousands proved wrong

"I gather from what you have been saying," I volunteered, "that Winder-Thompson is not the only living unread humorous writer."

"Bless my soul, no!" cried Mr. Coot—he takes size 17 in collars but could manage 15½ with ease, "he is simply the funniest unread living humorous author.

"HUNDREDS, POSSIBLY THOUSANDS OF FAIRLY FUNNY, FAINTLY FUNNY, AND FRIGHTFULLY UNFUNNY AUTHORS, WHO HAVE HITHERTO PRESUMED THAT THEY MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF A PUBLIC SOMEWHERE, HAVE NOW BEEN PROVED WRONG."

★ Nut cutlets are nearly indistinguishable

"Of course," remarked this middle-aged filing clerk who once had ambitions of being a ledger clerk, "if it were possible to tell by casually glancing at letterpress, but not actually reading it, whether it was going to be funny, things might

be very different, but it isn't and . . . well . . . they aren't.

"One unread piece of prose is amazingly like another."

"UNREAD, LINCOLN'S SPEECH AT GETTYSBURG AND GAYELORD HAUSER'S RECEIPT FOR NUT CUTLETS ARE NEARLY INDISTINGUISHABLE."

"Put them side by side in a humorous periodical and the only person who might possibly be affected," added Mr. Coot, who apart from an occasional attack of swine fever has never had a day's illness in his life, "would be the casual-gleancer who sometimes gets lured into reading something by the psychological appeal of its better-placed proper names."

★ Determined effort to dig

"Now that you have made these facts public," I said, "I imagine that many humorous writers, panic-stricken and dejected by the receipt of these unwelcome tidings, will be making determined efforts to dig up some kind of a public somewhere, eh?"

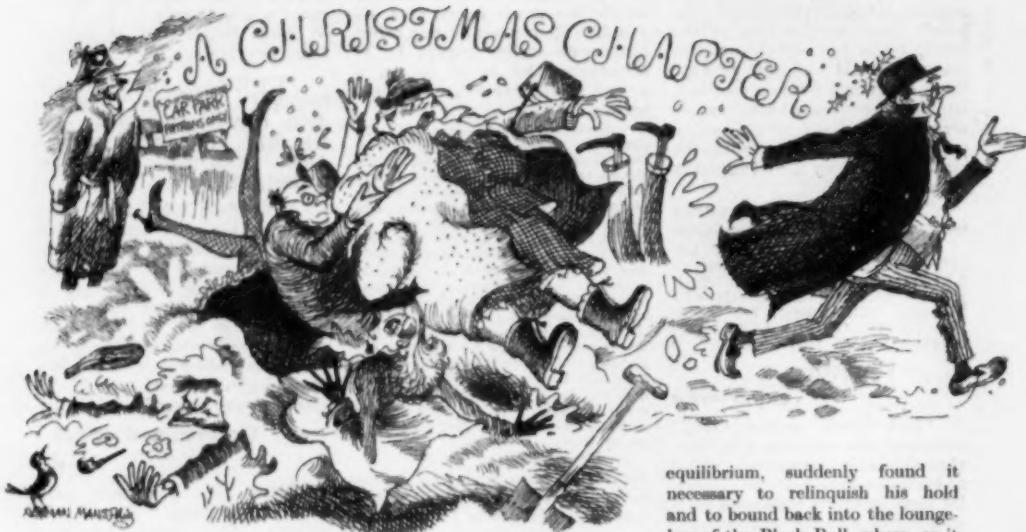
"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Coot who until the age of nine had never been to the Isle of Wight, "though of course there will always be those who prefer for obvious reasons to remain unread."

★ Expect fancy type

"What precise steps Thompson and the other boys may be taking," added Mr. Coot chattily, "I am not in a position to say; what with my researches and one thing and another I seem to get precious little time these days for non-serious reading, but it is not inconceivable that some of the expedients of the popular Press will be resorted to in the hopes of compelling attention."

"MY TIP IS: EXPECT A GOOD DEAL OF FANCY TYPE AND PLENTY OF SPURIOUS URGENCY AND EXAGGERATED IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO SUBJECTS WHICH ARE OF VERY LITTLE CONSEQUENCE AND MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN CONCOCTED SPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION."

DANIEL PETTIGRAD

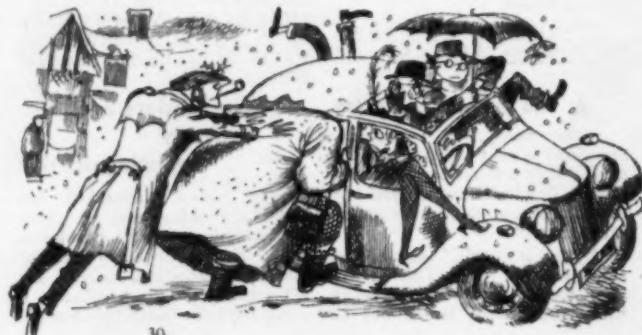


Containing some details of the catastrophe which befell Mrs. Chautle outside the Black Bull Inn, together with a faithful account of a perilous journey to Plumtree Crescent, and a glimpse of the merry-making which ensued; and offering some idea of the delights to be contained in the next Chapter.

NEVER was such commotion outside the Black Bull Inn as on that starry Christmas night! Never such a wailing of feminine voices—and it must be added in this connection, in fairness to all concerned, that the voice of a certain yellow-haired miss not entirely unconnected with that noble profession, the Stage, wailed above all the others—never such a wailing, I say, as when Mrs. Chautle (propelled from behind by some unknown power which may or may not have been initiated by that long-suffering chartered accountant, Mr. Chautle himself, who stood at the top of the steps), plunged head foremost into a mound of snow and was extricated only after ten minutes of the most strenuous

activity—(ten minutes was the time, according to young Mr. Percival's nine carat, non-magnetic, unsinkable chronometer: and let no one dare to hint that such a magnificent example of the art of the Swiss could err by so much as a single second)—an activity, it may be remarked, which might have produced far more satisfactory results, in about half the time, had not Mr. Chautle, at the very climax of the operation, when his good wife was almost on the point of being restored to a proper state of

equilibrium, suddenly found it necessary to relinquish his hold and to bound back into the lounge-bar of the Black Bull, where, as it subsequently transpired, he had left one of his darts. The result of his abrupt departure, with the consequent redistribution of Mrs. Chautle's weight among the struggling helpers, was to precipitate four of them, together with Mrs. Chautle herself, into the mound of snow aforementioned—a circumstance which moved a bystander (a humorous individual with the collar of a camel-hair coat pulled up about his ears and a pale green pirate's hat of tissue-paper on his head) to give it as his opinion that the ingenious mechanical device





known to the trade as a block-and-tackle was, and always had been, a highly commendable article of machinery, and one, moreover, of which more widespread use might be made, with considerable advantage to mankind in general and stout ladies in particular: adding in a somewhat louder tone, evidently for the benefit of the yellow-haired miss (who was, however, in no condition to reply, being only partly visible under the vast and tweedy shape of Mrs. C.), the information that fish-net nylons and high-heeled open-work dance-shoes, pleasing as was their all-round effect on an innocent bystander, did not afford that protection to the nether limbs of young females which the recent heavy fall of snow, combined with the blast of arctic ferocity which was now positively hurling itself across the deserted car-park, seemed, upon mature reflection, to render desirable.

Merry indeed were the voices of the assembled party when, Mrs. Chautle having been set on her own two feet at last and consoled with a nip of a certain golden-coloured liquid from a flask which old Mr. Merryboy produced apparently from thin air, they stood and stamped in a circle around young Mr. Percival's four-seater! How the yellow-haired miss contrived to persuade old Mr. Merryboy that she too was in urgent need of

consolation from that mysterious flask; by what precise conjuring trick young Mr. Percival performed the manifestly impossible feat of inserting seven live, adult, human bodies into a space intended for the accommodation of four; to what extent the lump which was discovered later on the top of little Mr. Cheep's head could be said to be attributable, directly or indirectly, to the fact of his being persuaded to sit on Mrs. Chautle's knee, with the inevitable result that his hat was knocked to the floor and his bald pate brought into much closer proximity to the roof of the conveyance than would have been the case had he been permitted to travel in a more orthodox fashion; whether a certain sprig of green leaves and glossy white berries (which bore, it cannot be denied, a remarkable resemblance to that pleasant horticultural phenomenon generally assumed to have played no small part in the rites of the ancient Druids) was introduced into the four-seater by young Mr. Percival, the yellow-haired miss, or old Mr. Merryboy, and with what end in view; why nobody ascertained, until they had driven a good quarter of a mile, that they were not only proceeding in the wrong direction but had left Mr. Chautle behind in the lounge-bar of the Black Bull (where, as they presently found, he was engaged, more or less simultaneously, in the drinking of hot rum, the dancing of a samba, and the singing of a ballad of which the words seemed to consist principally of an exhortation to some person or persons unknown to come and make eyes at him down at a venerable hostelry which shall be nameless); and whose suggestion it was, when some half-hour later they pulled up outside the semi-detached residence of young Mr. Percival's aunt with such a jolt that the rear number-plate parted company with its screws and fell down a grating, that they should offer up a harmonized rendering of "Hark, The Herald Angels" in the front garden of the house next door, to the spirited accompaniment of old Mr. Merryboy on a cardboard squeaker and the yellow-

haired miss on the corrugated-iron wall of the garage; — all these are questions which must, for reasons of space as much as for lack of any coherent information from the parties chiefly concerned, remain for ever shrouded in that benevolent mist which hides the innermost complexities of our mortal activities during the festive Christmas season.

A report of the boundless hospitality of young Mr. Percival's aunt (involving as it did the opening of a tin of imported tongue and the carving of a succulent pork chop into nine separate and distinct portions), together with an account of little Mr. Cheep's valiant attempt to produce some illumination from the fairy-lights which festooned a small tree of the coniferous variety standing on a three-legged stool in the front parlour, must await a future chapter. So, too, must an impartial investigation into the singular behaviour of old Mr. Merryboy and the yellow-haired miss, who were observed by more than one member of the party to introduce into a game of Musical Chairs certain manoeuvres which might have surprised the jovial gentleman who originally drew up the rules of procedure for that most amiable entertainment. Nor must we deprive our readers of the benefit of eavesdropping at an enlightening piece of conversation which took place, during the evening, in



the scullery, where Mr. Chautle was surprised by his good lady in the act of finishing off, for the purpose of furthering scientific inquiry, a bottle of young Mr. Percival's aunt's rhubarb wine. And, of course, the reader will be overwhelmed with curiosity by this time to know what further adventures befall Mortimer Sligh, the cross-eyed dirt-track rider, and his ne'er-do-well son.

And so, as the glass of little Mr. Cheep is raised in a toast to Absent Friends, and as the eyes



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BUILDING JERUSALEM

"HONEY, I'll ring you back," said Prima, putting down the receiver.

"The English for that is," I suggested. "I'll telephone to you again."

"The Old English," amended Secunda, who, ignorant little bessom though she is, sometimes has her flashes.

"What about Honey?" Major asked.

"Honey's all right."

"Who settles these things?"

"Mum settles them," said Minor. "Like she settles on Monday that the key must be kept on the last hook of the dresser, and raises Cain on Tuesday because it's there."

"You get me wrong," I told them. "There's no caprice in this. It's a Crusade."

"Against Prima!"

"Against ringing you back."

"And trying us out!"

"Yes, and meeting you up, and other selected objectives."

"But our point is Who selects the objectives?"

"Milton selects them. Shakespeare approves them. Burns and Shelley, as you would put it, couldn't agree more."

"Would we be safe in putting it like that?"

"Of course. This is not a war between the old and the new. It's between the good and the bad."

"Bad . . ." Minor murmured.

"Do I remember you leaning over my cot with Burns and Shelley and saying something about Bad?"

"Minor! My darling boy!"

"Why should he be your darling boy?" asked Prima coldly.

"He remembers about Bade. Always pronounced Bayed."

"You mean," said Secunda with that air she has of attending to what in my speech could be thought to matter, "that Bayed is one of your objectives."

"It's one of my dearest objectives. Almost as dear as Disinterested. Disinterested is really my darling. The hate I feel for it is pure gold. I listen for it, I lie in wait for it and it never fails me."

"So what can you do?"

"Oh, I have my little ways. I educate, or I re-educate. I inject."

"But I thought you'd taught us that when people mispronounce a word in our presence, we have to mispronounce it the same way. Like calling them Narssies when we're talking about them with Mr. Churchill."

"That's true. But Mr. Churchill is on my side, actually. Narssies is one of the forms of it, though it's a point that's rather hard to see."

"It's terrible for you having us so dull," said Prima. "Is there a point, I wonder, we could see?"

"Well, there's Transportation and Exportation and Discernment . . ."

of old Mr. Merryboy grow moist in remembrance of the carefree days of his youth, and as the yellow-haired miss demurely offers the other end of her cracker to young Mr. Percival, and as young Mr. Percival's aunt comes proudly in with yet another batch of fourpenny-ha'penny mince-pies, let us draw a temporary curtain across the happy scene, and steal away, however reluctantly, from one hundred and forty-one Plumtree Crescent, leaving the rest to Phiz.

ALEX ATKINSON

"Is there such a word?"

"Not yet, but there will be. Displacement, Enjoymentation, Appointmentation . . ."

"Aren't you looking on the dark side a bit?" asked Minor soothingly.

"I wish I were. I'm only being prepared."

"I tried to strike a blow for you the other day at my place of business," Major volunteered. "We were finalizing on the position opposite alkathene."

"How fascinating! What do you suppose you were really doing?"

"That's what I asked them. I believe we were looking to see how much of it we'd got."

"Were you allowed to say so?"

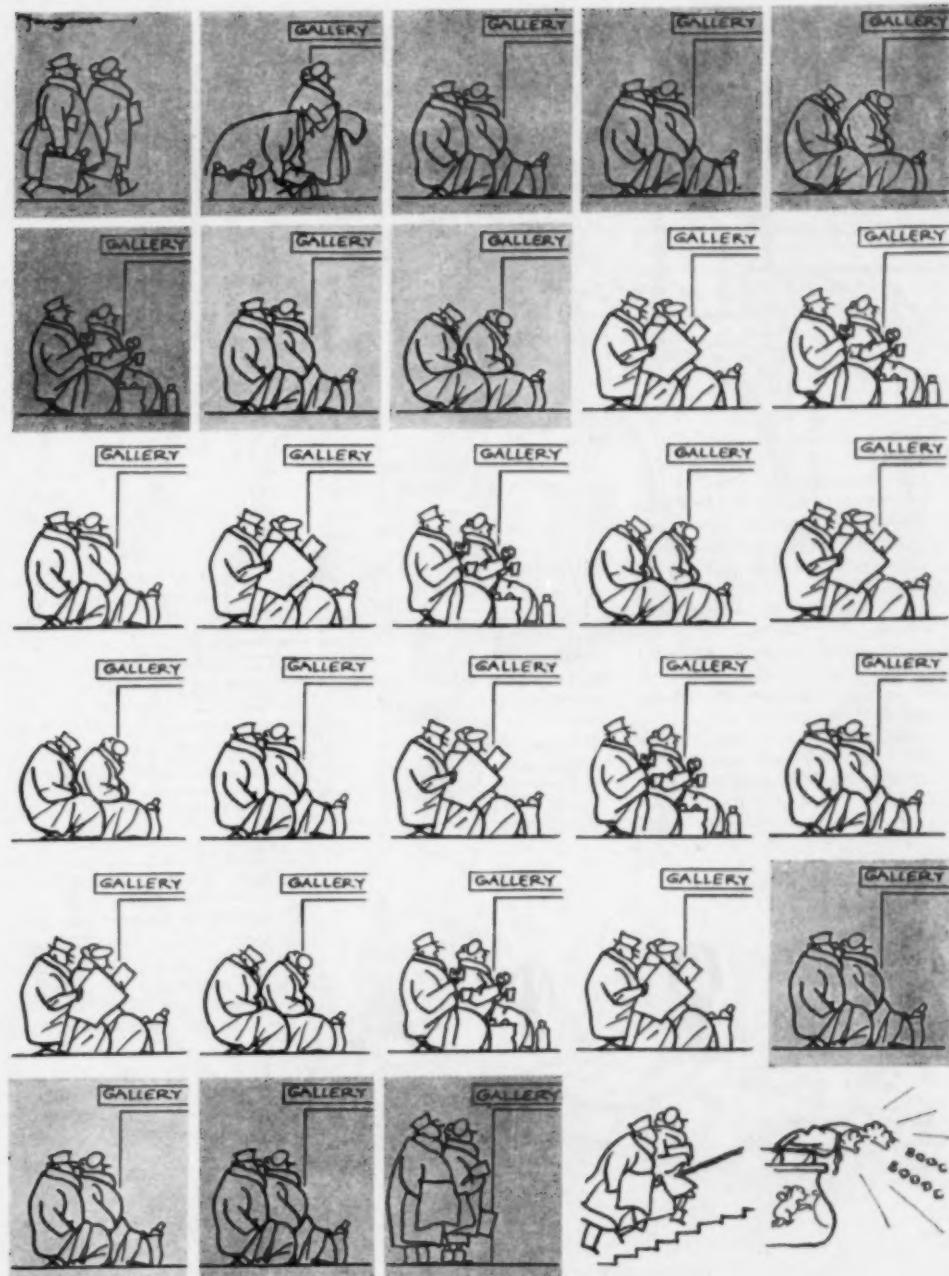
"I'm afraid not. We were so rushed with people placing orders on the factory . . ."

"Ah well, one can only plug on. It's what I have to do with my fishmonger. He says 'Bye-bye, duck.' Sometimes I answer him 'Bye-bye, duck,' thinking that may startle him and bring him to his senses, and other times I say 'Good morning,' hoping that might have the same effect."

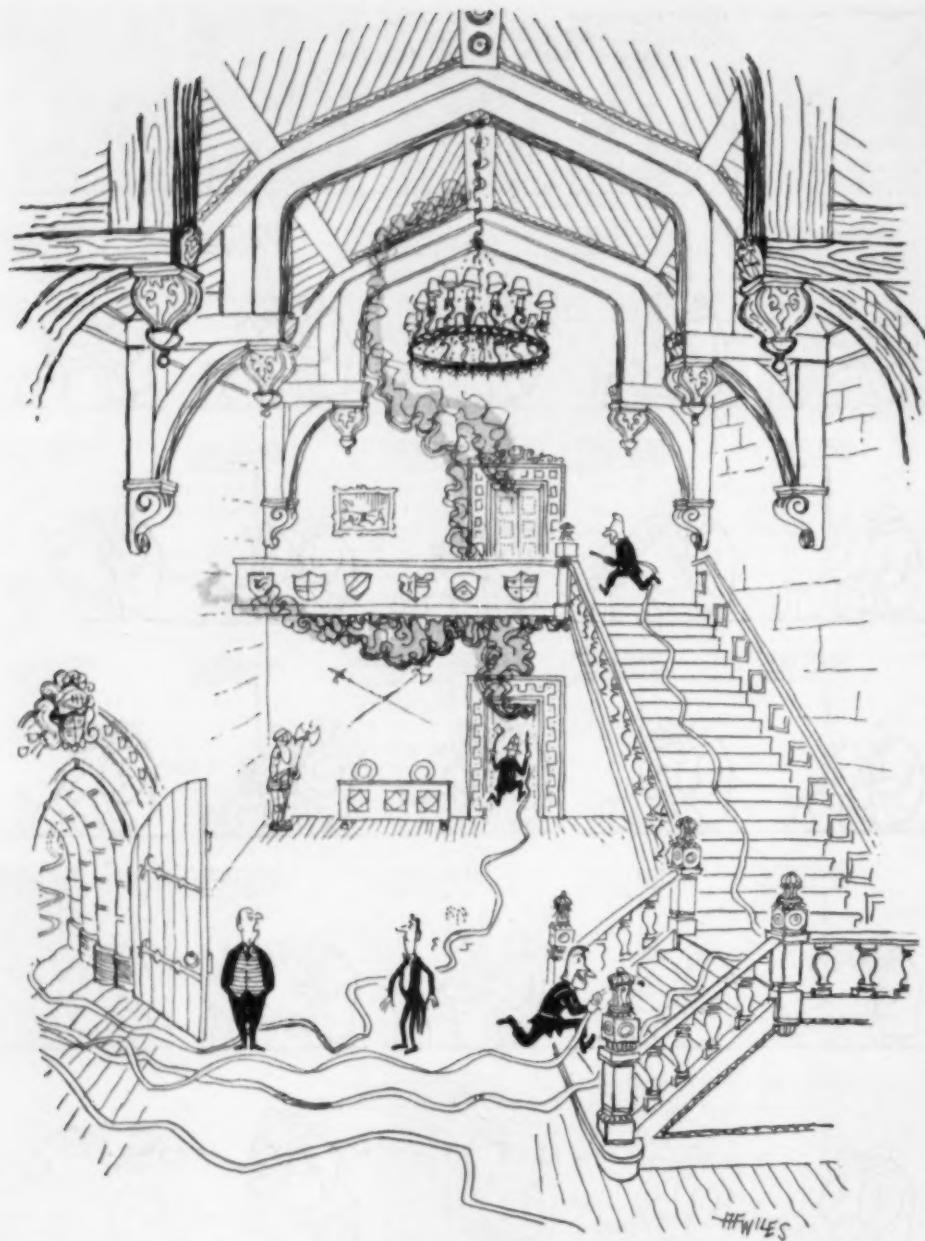
"And do you feel you're getting any results with him?"

"It's hard to tell. He still says 'Bye-bye, duck,' when he's handing me my pair of kippers."

"I wonder," mused Secunda thoughtfully, "if he feels he's getting any results with you."



THE FIRST-NIGHTERS



"Firemen all over the place — Her Grace will be livid."

THE INTERPLANETARY CHAKIVARI

GAG-MEN FOR MARS?

HUMOROUS WEEKLY'S BID TO BREAK GRAVITATIONAL BARRIER

THE secret is out. Plans that have long been maturing in Bouverie Street for a dash into space with a load of jokes, belles-lettres and other *facetiae* became public property recently when a member of the crew, out for a training run in his space-suit, was spotted by newshawks in a lonely stretch of the Fulham Road. To avoid misrepresentation it has accordingly been decided to tell the *full story*.

HOW IT BEGAN

The presence or absence of life on Mars, to name but one heavenly body, is a matter of debate. So is the existence of canals, patches of vegetation, polar ice-caps, etc. But on the absolute *jokelessness* of outer space all authorities are agreed. There is no laughter, as we know it, on those distant worlds. This is no mere guesswork, based on an instinctive reluctance to credit the existence of jokes of which we have never heard, but scientific fact. "A long history of cracking and cooling"—the words are those of Dr. Boot—"at a rate and in conditions peculiar to our planet are a necessary prerequisite for the creation of an environment in which what we may call Cac-chinating Man can flourish—can indeed begin. A certain equability of climate (I say nothing for the moment of atmospheres) is essential for that zymosis of intelligent life that finds its vent in laughter . . ." Dr. Boot says a good deal, later on, about atmospheres, but already we can see what he means. People, even if they exist, just don't begin to be funny in extremes of temperature ranging from 50 degrees F. to a hundred degrees of frost in six hours. This is not to say that it is *impossible* to be amusing, or amused, in these Martian conditions, but rather that the *urge* to laugh will not grow up naturally as intelligent life develops unless some stimulus is given from outside.

Fun will not be endemic in such regions, but may conceivably be introduced from elsewhere, like rabbits into Australia.

The argument applies with added force to Mercury, where the temperature on the sunny side is akin to that of molten zinc.

When we at No. 10 Bouverie Street were made aware of these conclusions the wish to break through the barriers imposed upon us by the Earth's mass and bring the boon of merriment to our laughterless fellow-Solarians became paramount. It is true that we could not, we cannot now, be certain of finding life on any planet within our immediate range. But, at the worst, we could try the effect of our jokes upon each other in an entirely new environment—an experiment with unpredictable results, as polar explorers have found. At best, we could be certain that our entire stock of humorous stories could be brand new to any Martians, Venusians or others with the intellectual acumen to understand them. The bare possibility of so much untilled ground awaiting the plough-share excited the enthusiasm of writers and artists alike.

We have always realized, of course, that care will be needed in the presentation of many terrestrial jokes if the point is to be properly taken. The Curate's Egg, for instance, would misfire in its traditional form on Mercury, where the bishop-curate relationship is of doubtful occurrence and where eggs, if laid at all, must be hard-boiled to a degree inconceivable to earth-bound imaginations. Some rephrasing would be necessary here. But the formula, assuredly, will hold.

MACHINERY

This has been kept to a minimum, and most of what there is is secret. But it can be disclosed that electronic vanes will help to solve some of the problems of temperature-stabilization in outer space. These are likely to be controlled by banks of triodes, radially disposed, amplification being obtained by means of eliminator-grids on the familiar "damped-oscillation" principle. In addition compensator-motors will regulate the flow of oxygen and automatically correct any tendency to "divagation," the astronomical term for lateral displacement of the internal organs due



-Footsteps

THE SPACE FUNSTERS

Left to right (back row)—Krog, Dr. Boot, Kirby Standing
Left to right (front row)—Gah, Jim Marton (aged 11)
Dr. Boot is holding a model of Mars (greatly reduced)

PRESS

One of the Control Buttons
(greatly enlarged)

to the proximity of minor asteroids. Cooking will be by gas. To dispatch this complicated and delicate machinery, together with its precious human freight, at the needful escape-velocity of 25,000 m.p.h., Dr. Boot is making use of what he describes as "an entirely new method." The pear-shaped blister, heavily shrouded in tarpaulin, that can be seen rising above the machicolations on the roof of No. 10, seems to bear out this claim.

PRECIOUS HUMAN FREIGHT

With accommodation on the space-ship *Stellar Charisari* limited to six persons and everyone at No. 10 eager to go, it looked at one time as if a ballot would prove necessary. But Dr. Boot, scientific adviser to the expedition and leader-elect, had other views. "A suitable name is the first qualification for space-travel," he declared at our first staff gathering, "and I have accordingly chosen to accompany me on my mission Krog, Gah, Kirby Standing and little Jim Marten, aged eleven. The rest of you will kindly return to your desks."

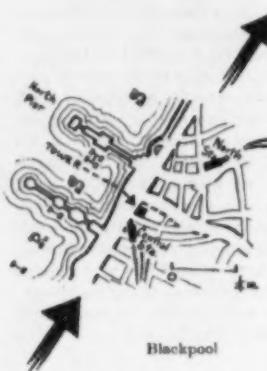
The Doctor has complete confidence in his team. "Krog and Gah will do the rough work," he explains. "I expect them to conceal a genuine

Approximate Path of Projectile
(not to scale)

affection for each other beneath a cloak of good-humoured raillery, and have told them so. Of little Jim Marten it is not too early to say that his courage and cheerfulness will be an example to us all. As for Kirby Standing, the only county cricketer in the party, gay, debonair and six foot three in his leaden boots, he is a born astronaut. Not but what," quipped the doyen of interplanetary funsters, "it will be a nuisance if some Martian princess sets eyes on him."

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Where is the expedition going? This is still under discussion. Little Jim Marten wants to go to the Moon. He has read, he says, in *The Boy's*



Book of Rockets that the Earth looks well from there. "Four times larger than the Moon we see," the book says, "she will sweep majestically across the sky, Queen of the Moon Night." This has caused one of Dr. Boot's fits of ungovernable rage. "She will do nothing of the kind," he shouts. "Since the Moon always points the same face towards our planet, the Earth will just hang in the same place in the sky, slowly rotating on its axis."* This sentence

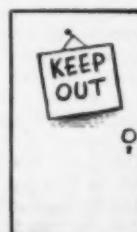
* The only way to make the Earth sweep across the sky would, according to the Doctor, be to go to the other side of the Moon, come up over the rim at a smart pace, and run rapidly across the hither surface, looking over the shoulder, of course, during the second half of the journey. "This is an exercise," he adds, "that in view of the craters, I should be loth to attempt."



takes some shouting. "It is true," Dr. Boot adds in calmer tones, "that you would be able to tell the time by the position of Everest, but that is not the object of the expedition."

Krog wants to go to Jupiter, which is covered to a depth of six thousand miles with marsh gas and ammonia at a temperature of minus 250 degrees F. "Gah and I are used to living rough," he explains. But Dr. Boot thinks this too severe a test even for a sense of humour. On the whole it seems likely that the ship will steer for Mars.

Will scientific data be collected? No. This business is becoming a perfect nuisance. Since the news of the trip leaked out there has been a constant stream of meters and dials and small wicker baskets into the office. We have been asked to dig for earthworms on the Moon (a patent absurdity), to take photographs of cosmic rays from the side, chip pieces off the cold side of Venus, and plant a kind of *algae* on the banks of extremely problematical canals. Dr. Koch has twice tried to smuggle his bird-recording apparatus into the hold, and a gentleman in Yorkshire actually sent a narrow-necked self-closing nylon bag "for specimens," as he was pleased to put it, "of the ionosphere." It cannot be too



The Engine Room,
seen from abaft the Stabilizer



"Not barge, Charlie—narrow boats!"



"Ah well, thank goodness we still have our sense of humour."

emphatically stated that the aim of the expedition is to spread gaiety and fun, not to measure the co-efficient of expansion of molybdenum at sub-terrestrial temperatures.

Disposal of Rubbish. This is a serious problem, for as is well known anything thrown out of a spaceship in the frictionless interplanetary void will continue to travel alongside with the velocity of the parent body. It is psychologically undesirable, for men closely confined together for days on end, to see yesterday's potato peelings in constant attendance outside the window. It is even possible that the rubbish would begin to orbit.

Dr. Boot has given much thought to this problem. Short bursts of increased speed would leave the satellite waste behind, but variations in velocity are undesirable for navigational reasons, and would in any case afford only temporary relief. A series of unpleasant and even dangerous showers might harass the astronauts during their first few days on the new planet.

Why has accommodation for six been arranged for a crew totalling five? Dr. Boot says this is "in case." Some believe he fears that a stow-away called Sheila or Pam will be discovered on the second day out.

Others point significantly to the fact that the furnishing of the spare cabin is "fit for a princess." Asked about his intentions, in the event of certain Martian complications, Kirby Standing said they were Earthly. The reference is not understood, but it made Krog laugh.

When will the expedition start?

As soon as the strengthening of the roof at ivy-clad No. 10 Bouvierie Street can be completed. Dr. Boot's confident "We shall be there by Christmas" leaves the precise date in suspense, so long as he declines to state where.

H. F. ELLIS

3 3

MARS KNOWS!

"May Be Laughing Already"—Boot

LEARNING that hints of the mission had reached the public, Dr. Boot at once invited members of the Press to his laboratory. "If the cat is out of the bag it had better be the right cat," he said, adding with a twinkle—"and the right bag. Both have suffered a degree of garbling in the reports so far published."

NOT TECHNICAL

Except to refer briefly to some aspects of geodetic triangulation as affected by Chandrasekhar's law of diffuse reflection, and recent experiments by the *Gesellschaft für Weltraumforschung*'s advisers on the minimum needful vitamin content of the ideal space sandwich, he did not intend, said Dr. Boot, to deal in technicalities of any kind. He recognized that a scientific approach was inseparable from the matter in hand, but the mission must above all remember its slogan, "A Jolly Good Laugh for Space." It was to that end that all efforts were directed. The Doctor then revealed that Mars had been chosen as the first objective. "What is more," he said, "they know we are coming."

ROCKET HAD "FUNHEAD"
"I had hoped before now,"

continued Dr. Boot, "to have received a message from the Martian Government. More than a month ago there was dispatched, from the roof of this very building, a small, pilotless rocket, the *Stellar Charivariette*, a reduced-scale replica of its parent spacecraft now in the final stages of construction. The pre-set destinational mechanism of the *Charivariette* ensured its arrival on Mars at six-fifteen last Thursday evening, and deductions drawn from the fact that its stick fell to earth, as and when expected, outside Holborn Town Hall, show that it was maintaining directional accuracy. I have no doubt that it has arrived. This well-intentioned missile had its warhead—funhead, as I prefer to call it—loaded with leaflets announcing our intentions and embodying a selection of easy sample jokes. I have a small stock of these leaflets surplus, and I hope that any gentleman who cares to take one on leaving will do so." [We reproduce this document on the next page.]

PHYSICAL SPASMS

"No indication of Martian reaction has at present reached me," the Doctor went on, "but I am sure that it is now only a matter of time—and, naturally, space. The delay

may be due to miscalculation on our part. We have perhaps underestimated the effect of Laughter on a community which has never laughed before. You will recall Professor Glüm's theory that continual over-stimulation of the laughter-glands means that jokes must grow funnier as mankind grows older, if laughter is not to die out altogether—a theory which would seem to account for the high incidence of nervous disorders among working humorists. Now, a reversed extension of this theory, if I may put it so, suggests that persons exposed to humour for the first time may well be subject to the most violent physical spasms, and



it seems not unlikely that, confronted with the jests packed in the *Stellar Charivariette*, the whole of Mars has laughed itself sick, and is not yet sufficiently strong to dispatch its messages of gratitude, welcome and goodwill."

DOGS LAUGHED

It had been objected that the Martians might lack the physiological equipment for Laughter. Dr. Boot would devote a moment to demolishing this notion. Such

"equipment," in his view, existed in all living creatures, and only needed awakening and exercising. Members of the animal kingdom, for example—with the exception of the larger mammals whose bulk was unsuited to prolonged vibration—could be educated to laughter if only sufficient pains were taken. He himself, in the early days of his researches into the Anatomy of Fun, had trained two dogs to laugh so heartily at a third, that well-meaning neighbours had reported

the experiment to the R.S.P.C.A. It was true, of course, that training in Joke Perception and Response might be necessary on Mars. Rome was not built in a day. But the Mission's Landing Plan, of which he would now sketch an outline, had, he felt, faced the problem squarely.

BANANA-SKIN

The Plan was threefold.

1. *Visual.* The first two crew members to alight on Mars would carry an enlarged illustrated joke, mounted on a specially-designed collapsible frame, and would display it to the crowd of Martians assembled as a reception committee. The subject of this joke was among final details yet to be settled. Great care would have to be given to this, and as a safeguard against excessive and possibly crippling laughter it would probably exploit some Universal experience—something of the "marooned-on-desert-island" school, perhaps. Should reaction be negative, the joke-frame would be collapsed and a third member of the party would take over for a simple piece of clowning. "If I may demonstrate," said Dr. Boot—"I envisage something after this style." He then advanced across the laboratory, a hand outstretched in welcome, said "Fellow Universe-dwellers, Friends ——" and fell heavily to the floor, appearing to have stumbled. "You recognize the banana-skin principle," he said, returning to his seat. "And if the Martians laugh half as loudly as you did, gentlemen, I shall be more than satisfied." If not, further comic stimuli under this heading would be brought into play, among them Bristlehoff's classic, the Exchanged Hat. Members of the expedition would exchange hats with each other, and, if practicable, with nearby Martians, and pose in a variety of amusing attitudes.

2. *Aural.* Dr. Boot warned of the need to remember that our ideas about the Martian sense of humour were at present purely speculative. Perhaps we were too complacent in assuming its inferiority to our own; the reverse might well be true; in which event, such knockabout stuff

A MESSAGE FOR MARS

Please Read and Pass to a Friend

UNKNOWN MARTIAN FRIEND,

Soon you will see in your sky an object looking like this:



or, possibly, this:



Do not be alarmed. It is only the spacecraft *Stellar Charivari*, with a cargo of LAUGHTER—of which a jocund foretaste is to be found later in this leaflet.

WHAT IS LAUGHTER? This is easier to demonstrate (which we mean to do) than to describe, but broadly it is the outward and physical expression of an inner and emotional response to the irresistibly comical: as might occur, for example, if your planet's Leader, arrayed for a Planetary Occasion and with Martian trumpets sounding, mounted his horse with great dignity and at once fell off the other side.

DOES LAUGHTER HURT? In moderation, and with practice, no. In excess and at first it may result in strained muscles, bruised ribs and ruptured blood-vessels, but even on Earth (the "Laughing Planet") such mishaps are rare at the present time.

WHAT IS LAUGHTER FOR? It enables troubles to be taken lightly. For instance, in the event of disasters overtaking our mission on its journey through space—there may be outbreaks of fire, or members may suffer from space-sickness and fall overboard—in such emergencies suitable jokes would at once be made by other members, and in the ensuing Laughter the mishaps forgotten.

HOW IS LAUGHTER CAUSED? By acting in an entertaining manner, making humorous remarks, or relating droll anecdotes either orally or pictorially. Demonstrations of the first must await the arrival on Mars of the *Stellar Charivari*. Of the remainder, specimens are appended hereunder, three oral, one pictorial.

A. "How does your new horse answer?" said the Duke of Cumberland to George Selwyn. "I really do not know," replied George, "for I never asked him a question." B. A certain lawyer received a severe injury from something in the shape of a horsewhip. "Where were you hurt?" asked a medical friend. "Was it near the *certebra*?" "No, no," said the other. "It was near the *racecourse*." C. After his escape from a shipwreck a seaman was asked by a good lady how he felt when the waves broke over him. He replied. "Wet, ma'am—very wet."

D.



If required, members of the Mission will be pleased to clarify jokes A, B and C on arrival. The pictorial joke has been adapted to Martian needs, and you will no doubt all be Laughing heartily over it long before the *Stellar Charivari* enters your sky.

Yours imminently,

and in Martian Merriment,

(Signed) DR. BOOT

Please Read and Pass to a Friend

as that already outlined would be received with scorn. The next step must therefore be the spoken jest, with its increased scope for subtle nuance. Owing to the possibility of a language difficulty, however—he would not now go into Dr. Hacker's theory, based on a spectroscopic analysis of ionospheric particles, that the Martian tongue was very like our own—it would be advisable to make this an indirect demonstration. One member of the crew would publicly relate an anecdote to the remainder, sending them off into ungovernable peals of laughter. Even if nothing more came of this, it would at least give the Martian crowd some idea of what laughter looked and sounded like—a point the Doctor had found troublesome to "get across" in the *Charivariette* leaflet. A difficulty was that the chosen raconteur, if the laughter of his companions was to ring true, must devise an entirely original joke. "I may have to devise it

myself," said Dr. Boot, gravely. "Fortunately I shall have plenty of time on the journey."

3. *Force*. As a last resort only. "Frankly," said Dr. Boot, "I do not think that we shall have to fall back on Part Three of the Plan at all; it is just that we must be prepared to meet all eventualities."

MARTIAN MERRIMENT

The Mission, continued the Doctor emphatically, had a new and shining opportunity, the opportunity not only to introduce to a wide selection of Planetary communities the priceless boon of laughter, but to ensure, by the exercising of rigid controls from the start, that only laughter in its most desirable forms would ever gain a footing there. "Only over the Mission's dead bodies," he declared, "shall the Hollow Laugh, the Laugh up the Sleeve, Guffawing, Sniggering, Ironie Laughter, Smiles both Wry and Sly, or any of the other

adulterating elements marring the purity of the Laugh Proper, ever take root in outer space. Thus, in the centuries to come, Martian Merriment will grow to be regarded as Laughter at its Best." What Mars laughed at to-day, the World would laugh at to-morrow.

LICHENS

Replying to the question: "Has Dr. Boot considered the probability that the atmosphere of Mars, being partly formed of minute ice crystals—the so-called 'violet layer'—and considerably richer in carbon dioxide than that of the Earth, may be unsuitable for inhalation on a scale sufficient for more than a short, whinnying titter?" the Doctor replied that he was not a physician but a Doctor of Humorobotany, and would in the circumstances prefer to answer the last question but one on the subject of Martian lichens. These, he said, were thought to be widespread.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

3 3

SCENE IN HOUSE

SPEAKER INTERVENES

Sir Waldron Smithers asked the Foreign Secretary this afternoon whether his attention had been drawn to a threatened attack, with the most mischievous weapons, believed to be in preparation against the planet Mars, and whether he had any statement to make.

The Foreign Secretary. Yes, sir. Reports appearing in the Press and elsewhere have had my attention drawn to them. The House may be interested to learn that a communication on this subject has reached me from Mars—

Dr. Dalton. By what agency?

The Foreign Secretary. Saucers.

Mr. Bing. On a point of order. Is that a proper expression—

The Foreign Secretary. I said saucers. The message is in the following terms. "Any attempt introduce so-called jokes on to this planet will be regarded as unjustifiable interference with Martian way of life. Inform Boot whole party will be dehydrated"—I understand the process is more painful

than liquidation—"on arrival and cargo returned to you with approximate speed of light."

A Member. Golly!

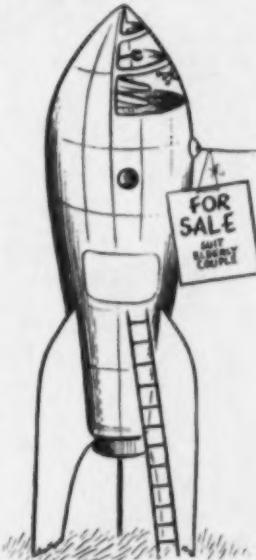
Continuing, the Foreign Secretary said that in view of the Martian attitude (with which he had considerable sympathy) the Government had no option but to draft a protocol of exceptional severity. ("Oh!") Briefly its terms were that no expedition could leave this country for an extra-terrestrial destination without a permit, and steps were being taken to confine the Boot Movement to E.C.A., where, under supervision, it could do little harm.

Sir Waldron. Why truckle?

At this point the Speaker intervened, and the House went on to discuss the Northumberland (Control of Sheep-grazing) Bill.

STOP PRESS

I give up—Dr. Boot.



[END OF THE INTERPLANETARY
CHARIVARI



"Lunnon folk, I expect."

THE UNABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

WITH yells and shrieks the children scoop
fire-shovelfuls of snow
and fling them on the mounding heap,
clipped shearings of old Winter's sheep,
and shout and jump and run and leap
to see the Snowman grow.

Stump legs to bear his bellied bulk,
as of a Berkshire boar,
his arms, his head, that round Dutch cheese,
sculpture's most vile of parodies—
outrage against Praxiteles,
insult to Henry Moore.

And he shall have an old, burnt pipe,
black-carbonized—and, lawks!
a dustbin hat of green-mould grey,
the gloves the scarecrow threw away.
and for his comfort, well-a-day!
the muffler of Guy Fawkes.

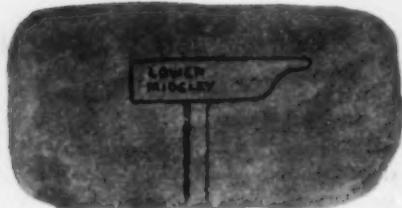
But—Chestertonian paradox!
the clumsy monster glows
with light we see through childhood's eyes
reflected out of Paradise
as once again we see him rise,
white phoenix, from the snows! R. C. SCRIVEN



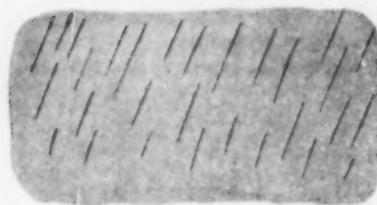
"Funny bats! If only they knew what fools they looked."



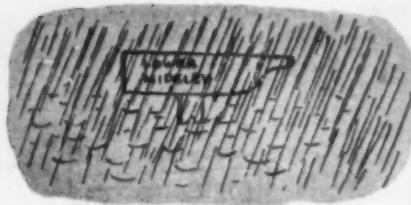
If there should be fog in London, it's always—



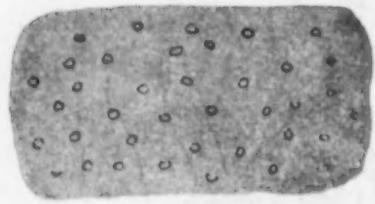
fifty times worse in Lower Midgley:



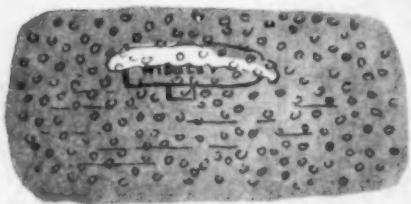
If there's rain in London, you can bet that—



Lower Midgley will be practically inundated:



If there's snow in London, it's absolutely certain that—



Lower Midgley will be completely snowed up:



In fact you'd wonder why anyone would live in Lower Midgley if you didn't know that—



most Lower Midgleyans work in London.



December 18th

WELL, so another prize-giving lies behind us with its feasting and merry pranks, another Christmas is upon us, $7\frac{1}{2}$ lb. caster in hand see butcher to-morrow re *any fat* for rendering down, and how quickly the year has gone by! I have just realized that it is *nearly the fortieth* since my dear Bruin Boys, bless them, were entrusted to this little school and my loving guidance. And watching them this morning, when the postman brought Maria's air-mail letter and they all tumbled out to see him fly away—with such a big rope flapping round the propeller, that mischievous Jacko and his humming-top—well, I thought, they haven't changed one little bit!

But there, I have had just the teeniest feeling of depression lately. That *Vogue* from Maria, I searched it in vain for a mob-cap and now this invitation to "jump right on a Clipper" (?) and eat my Christmas dinner in Yukon, well, not seeing one's own sister in forty years, no wonder. I am *not grumbling* about my dear Boys' parents, I quite understand how they are placed. Mrs. Ostrich for example, as she pointed out in her letter of 1927, some bits of the Great Karroo are worse than others and I would not like our good-natured Willie put off sand-castles for life. And then little Joey the parrot—I may not know much about the Merchant Navy or the North African run, only that postcard, but I can quite imagine four weeks in the "starboard side of a cage long overdue for a refit," in fact the only home life I would have *no qualms about* is Fido's, but Leamington would leave him in poor shape for our simple ideas of comfort. Also being small he eats less, that is, less than the others, and I would miss his ration-book.

Away, then, with gourches! The prize-giving to-day went wonderfully from the very start. Past seven when a crash—bed, books, pails of water and, I think, wardrobe—announced that the Boys were up and about. How glad I am that I have trained them in self-reliance! Not a sign when I looked in later, and the neatest row of tuckboxes (must confess took peep) full of plaster

"goodies" for the secret dormy spread. A happy custom—it means an hour's blessed silence, of which I take advantage now, and as for torn sheets, I think this year I will put them on the bill as sheets, for the parents will not know (except Fido's N.B.) that linen has come down a little in price.

And the prize-giving ceremony itself—really I was proud of my Boys when they raised their home-made banner *WE KUM DR. LION* (writing is only a matter of time, I tell them, hooves or no hooves, and they will soon get the knack) and shouted "Hooray! We hope the prizes in that big box on the porter's barrow are cakes!" Actually no connection Dr. L. and air-holes should have warned him, but the *slight suspicion* of pique when he had tipped the porter 8*½*d. for carrying upstairs a box that could have been opened *down*, for a seal can walk like anyone esp. our cheery Sammy, well it vanished when Dr. L. falling back to indicate amazement, shattered my precious fern *and* the platform, a damage I estimate of 17*s.* 3*d.* But again my dear clever Boys! In five minutes Tim and Bobby had wrenched door off hinges, laid it over debris (inc. at first the good Dr. himself) and replanted fern in my hat. Sometimes I think the Dr. is just a trifle jealous of my little protégés!

I fear that this prize-giving I could not resist telling him about the books—how these thick wooden volumes, just right for booby traps, have been handed out every year since 1919, they come up like new with a rub of furniture polish and my Boys would be the last to notice if a book is the same or different. Dr. L. made note on cuff, asked "How do you blow up a balloon with ears?" and praised my queen cakes. "Ah," I said merrily, "my cakes are my secret. But I assure you they are *eggless*." "I can tell that," grunted the worthy man, "I mean their shape." Gave him a gay enigmatical glance, which think have got right at last but spoilt by Sammy's herring falling in his tea-cup. Only other flaw in a delightful afternoon, found Boys had overlooked Decoy Hat so fern fish etc. in Best, but on shaking old sand from former see that *it is Best now*,

so blessing in *disg*. Shall write tell Maria the Boys my only happiness, sacred trust etc. and no more magazines, distinctive style smarter than mere fashion.

Dr. Lion asked quite suddenly "Are you recognized by the Ministry of Education?" Turns out that this is a ministry, of education, which recognizes some schools. Told him they would know ours at a glance by funny pink shading.

December 20th

Too busy baking to write yesterday. Also bills for parents. I do not think Fido's will quibble at their share of turkey, laundry, etc., but Georgie Giraffe's family hopelessly out of touch with reality, always writing "Make him eat trees then," which reminds me Jumbo's want him to have special log-rolling lessons and I must tell them teak unobtainable.

Another worry, my weekly flour-sack burst coming off lorry, no harm the Boys rolling in it, we are only young once, but they brought the rain in and much of house covered in white paste. And that is my biggest worry of all—the rain. *Not a sign of snow* and Christmas only 5 days off! I have taken to listening to the weather forecasts, but can hear only a voice that reminds me of Joey squeaking "More cakes for Bruin Boys!" If I hear the word cake again I shall have what I believe is called a nervous breakdown. Butcher *most unaccommodating*, only shinbones; have tried mixing bicycle-oil with ground rice but not a success.

My poor Boys bored to death this morning. After a low-spirited booby-trap (no weight in it, bucket half empty) I said "Why don't you read your nice prizes?" Idea, naturally, to prompt them to think of something else, but next minute a doleful cry: "Our books are a swiz! They are only wooden ones!" In desperation fetched 8 vols. Encyc. Brit. but sight of listless figures *turning pages over* too much for a teacher's heart.

"Come, Boys!" I cried briskly. "Take all the doors off their hinges and make a toboggan each! It will snow to-morrow!"

This worked like magic. Draughts, and the bending of bookshelves for runners, a small price to pay for seeing my Boys their old ingenious selves. A kettleful of steam, in their hands, will bend the toughest board and never a drop of paint on those expensive clothes. Only thing was, when all finished found self automatically bringing in tray of—no, *not that word*, will only say 2 days' baking eaten in flash and grocer sent *no icing sugar*, can this mean he has run out?? am contemplating gingerbread as last resort but suppose he has no brown either!! Funny, I keep worrying about the Ministry of Education, am constantly darting out to look at shading, which now seems almost white, and jump whenever door bell rings.

December 21st

Maria is right, I do need a holiday. I am not myself. Got up at 3 A.M., wrenched runners off those beautiful toboggans and nailed every single door back on its hinges. I do not know what has come over me, only excuse that house icy, lying there shivering and thinking how coal 2 days late and will never arrive now, logs damp, surely Boys old enough to enjoy brussels sprouts, what if this Ministry asks about lessons, all savings will go to fight case, languish in prison, revelation that Mr. B. only a myth, additional sentence for bigamy, Maria disgraced, Jumbo's family saying I told you so, gas bill due any day now, all this after 40 years' toiling in cause of others!

Definitely feverish this morning, drank some of bottle marked **FOR COLDS** but no diff. Got through day somehow. Kept off any mention toboggans and snow, gave Boys 8 best tablecloths, do. blankets, turkey feathers, axes, said go on be Indians and at tea-time brought out every doughnut in larder, also toffee apples, barley sugar, glaçé fruits, marzipan pumpkins, etc. What does it matter when career at end?

Have just found small funny-shaped bottle marked **BRANDY**, feel more cheerful already. Bed now. House glorious mess, everything all chopped up!

Christmas Eve

Quick note before I fill the pillow-cases. Rain goes on, Boys nearly off their heads, e.g. Tim beginning to snarl and ask for *raw meat*, relying conductors' outfits and prospect panto and if no

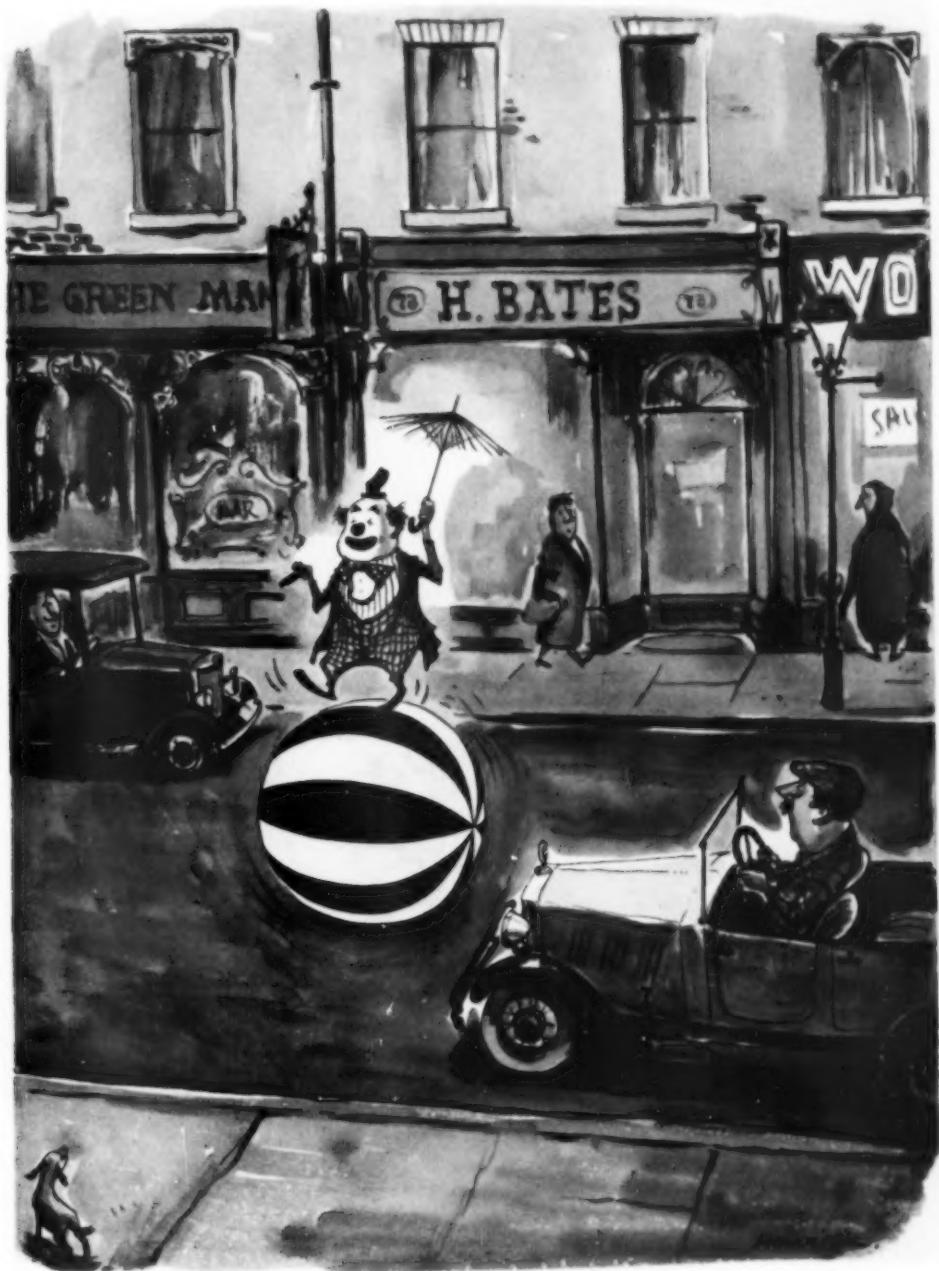
snow by 3 A.M. N.B. hide those lovely new toboggans pity but no sense taking risks. On *bright side* house beautifully clean and tidy at last, mass of paper-chains, etc. and rly. delivered yesterday sack icing sugar do. gran!! (both clearly marked Dr. L.'s Academy, how stupid rly. can be!) also, no mistake here, from anonymous well-wisher crate genuine pig-lard!!! Am wondering about our dear Porky Boy, who should have been with us for the festive season—but this no time to *look for trouble*.

Christmas Day

What did I say? Blizzard began midnight, drifts 10 ft. high, great thick chunks snow on roof, railings, rain barrel covered with ice four inches thick, and my Boys tobogganing away somewhere. Turkey sizzling, every cake-tin full and I have been ceremonially presented with a new hat just like my others! How blessed am I in my simple lot, how . . . but shall write no more as heart too full also great splintering crash and shouts from attic, shapes hurtling past window, house rocking, chimney-pots brickwork falling, so will just nip upstairs and have look before anything happens.

ANDE







"Every winterday—now how if he tries to drive."

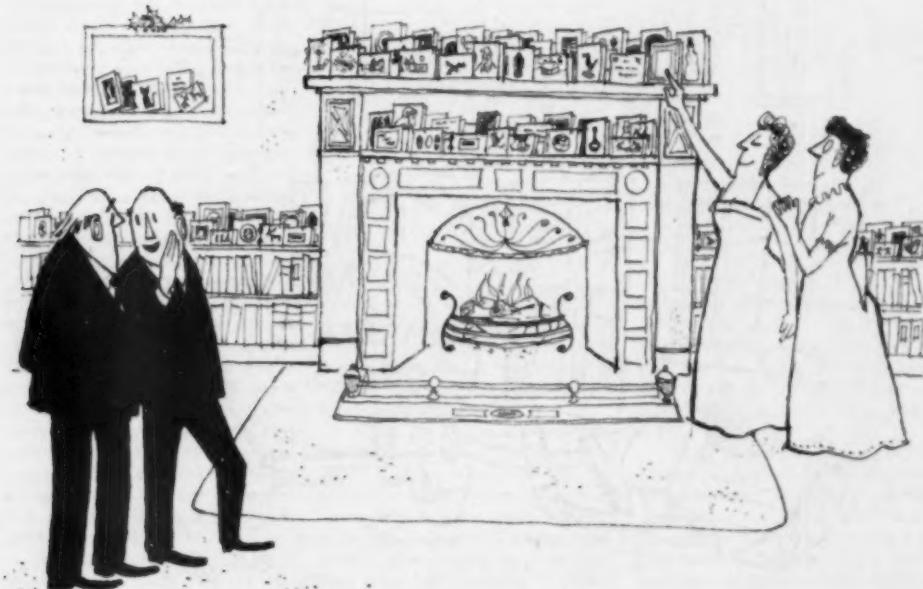
WHY ARE THERE ALWAYS AUNTS?

WHY are there always aunts at children's parties?
Whose aunts are they?
Where do they come from?
Solemnly sitting, clickily knitting;
Removing the gum from
The throat of some chew-crazy child whose queasy
young heart is
Bobbing about like a cork on a wind-whipped sea.

Powerful Beings who, clutching at chocolaty faces,
Hastily wipe them.
Invariably nameless,
Quietly waiting and undulating—
Apparently shameless
About their knowledge of intricate things like braces,
Rising, escorting, performing majestically.

Why are there always aunts? Are they invited?
Festooned with hankies,
Consoling, caressing:
Capable creatures without any features,
Restraining, repressing—
"Don't get too noisy-hot-dirty-rough-sticky-excited;
Now wouldn't you like to sit down for a minute by me?"

They are the ones who say when it's time to be going,
Looking for garments,
Buttoning, tying,
Shoeing and gloving and quite firmly shoving,
Grimly "Good-bye-ing . . ."
Spoiling the last-minute games with their to-ing and
fro-ing.
And why do they wave bread-and-butter about at tea?



"Don't let my wife know I told you, but some of them go back ten years."

THE MOODIE CHRONICLES

Male and Female

THE men in our childhood were for the most part shadowy figures, whose sketchy features only occasionally and in moments of particular crisis seem to have sharpened into a distinct outline. Their dispositions, if memory serves, were characterized by a somewhat unusual combination of gloominess and irreverence. They viewed the future with a foreboding not entirely devoid of relish; whilst the disasters of the present were greeted with anything from a shrug to a wink.

Something of their vagueness may also have been due to the special nature of the relationship between male and female in the

family. Great-aunt Susan's household was entirely female, and the eruption of any males upon the scene was, naturally enough, the occasion for a good deal of fuss and preparation. "What Uncle Orpington will think of your dress, hat, or pudding," Great-aunt Susan would say to Auntie George, "I really don't like to think," and then she would go into considerable detail as to what she would say if she were Uncle Orpington. But Uncle Orpington himself would never mention the dress, hat, or pudding, and one sometimes suspected that, for all the perspicience he was continually credited with beforehand, he was a man who did not notice such things.

Likewise, the impending arrival of uncles would lead to a great deal of extra polishing of silver and furniture, so that one tended to build up a picture of them as men who habitually expected to see their faces in all sorts of unlikely objects and who would leave the table in a towering rage at the slightest sign of tarnishing on the entrée dish. And here again, their actual tendency to merge hopefully into the background and Great-aunt Susan's habit of ignoring their every wish, when once she had them beneath her roof, puzzled the childish mind in its instinctive search for the underlying principle. Nor can one remember ever having suspected



" . . . say when!"

that Great-aunt Susan's theory was at odds with her practice; it was merely that the uncles, out of some mysterious male unaccountability, were continually belying their natures. And, on the whole, this added to their prestige.

They came into our lives on two kinds of occasion: festivals, public and domestic; and crises, family, of which there were not a few. At festivals, such as weddings, baptisms and anniversaries, they tended to slip off into the back room, where they would consume the statutory bottle of whisky which was always provided and exchange remarks about the general or particular doom which the occasion might be expected to bring in its train. Thus Christmas was a time for wondering which of them wouldn't see another Christmas, and weddings brought to their minds the very large number of people who had lived to rue the day.

Conversation was apparently sparing, but then most of it was achieved without recourse to words. "I remember his father," Uncle Penge would say, and they would all stare into their glasses, as if the whole irony of human endeavour lay within their amber depths; and when the glasses were empty Uncle Egremont would sway towards the sideboard uttering some such profundity as "Far-off fields . . ." and the fresh topic would be thrashed out as silently as the one before. Later the exigencies of the occasion might summon them into drawing- or dining-room, and they would peer down at us children, their eyes slightly bloodshot and their expression conveying a faint surprise. They never said things like "How you've grown," seeming sufficiently impressed by the mere fact of our survival. They smiled at us mysteriously and perhaps with sympathy, and one felt that they were a long way away, as one peered up into their faces through the fumes of whisky.

By nature they belonged to a different world from that of our aunts, and such was the strength of this unformulated tradition that any new males who happened to have strayed by marriage or other acci-



" . . . and then my wife got sentimental and decided to let it stay."

dent into the family were quickly and quietly absorbed into the back room, the only exception being Aunt Boadicea's husband, the tall, small-headed man who was affectionately known as Uncle Worm.

To us, Uncle Worm was simply different, and it is only in retrospect that one dares to wonder how the difference arose. There were other strong women in the family—indeed there was scarcely a woman who wasn't strong—and many of the men were mild creatures of rather less than middle height; but somehow or other they had come to terms with their ladies, at least to the extent of being permitted to

dodge the afternoon-tea parade in the drawing-room, whereas Uncle Worm was not merely on parade but also on duty, either behind the tea-pot in his own house or attending upon his wife in anybody else's.

Aunt Boadicea was a gaunt woman with a prodigious appetite and a tendency to become quarrelsome when hungry, so that Uncle Worm was kept busy ensuring a continuity of sandwiches and seed-cake, and at the same time keeping an eye on Great-aunt Susan, of whom he stood in considerable awe. In a long life-time Great-aunt Susan had only partially reconciled

herself to the habitual retirement of the male members of the family into the back room, and at tea-time she was subjected to a strong inner compulsion to ply them with cups of tea and Chelsea Buns. To this end either Auntie George or Uncle Worm would be dispatched at intervals with cups of tea, which the back-room boys would either decline politely or pour into an aspidistra, as the spirit moved them.

These were Uncle Worm's only glimpses of the back room and all it contained, apart from the time when Aunt Boadicea's head got stuck in the brass bowl; and after that he was never allowed to move out of the drawing-room without an escort.

It was Boxing Day, the year Cousin Plinlimmon married his housekeeper—an event which occasioned thin-lipped smiles upon the faces of our aunts, a kind of funereal jollity in the back room, and a general increase in festive spirit, which was symbolized in Great-aunt Susan's forgetting to lock away the half-bottle of brandy left over from Great-great-aunt Blodwen's last "turn." Everyone was in

what amounted to a cheerful frame of mind, and Uncle Worm was feeling considerably elated because Aunt Boadicea had promised him a new sink for the scullery.

It was this unfortunate concatenation of circumstances which resulted in Uncle Worm's spending a quantity of time in the back room which on any other occasion would have brought an admonitory shout from the drawing-room, and it was this also that inspired Uncle Penge to pour some whisky into one of the cups of tea and to persuade Uncle Worm to drink it. Aunt Boadicea used to boast that in twenty years her husband had never set eyes upon fermented liquor nor moistened his lips with anything stronger than still lemonade, and certainly when the time came for them to go home there was something in Uncle Worm's appearance that had not been there for a considerable time.

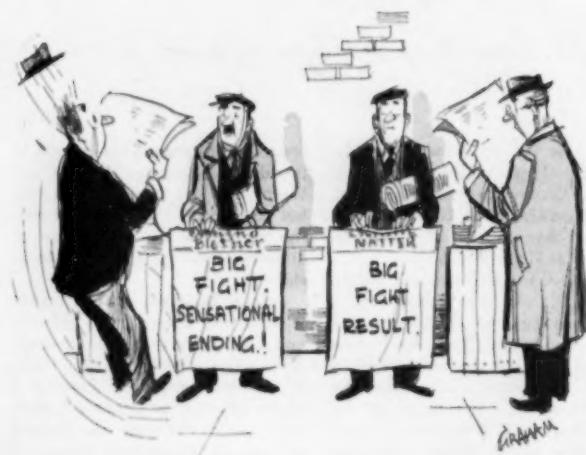
It was customary in our family that anyone leaving the house should be ceremoniously seen off by all the others. We issued from the drawing-room, therefore, in the wake of Aunt Boadicea, and the uncles came shuffling up the few

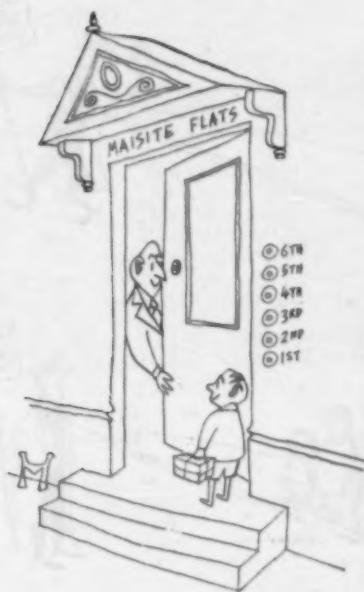
stairs from the back room, Uncle Worm tripping on the next to top stair as he rushed eagerly forward to help his wife into her coat.

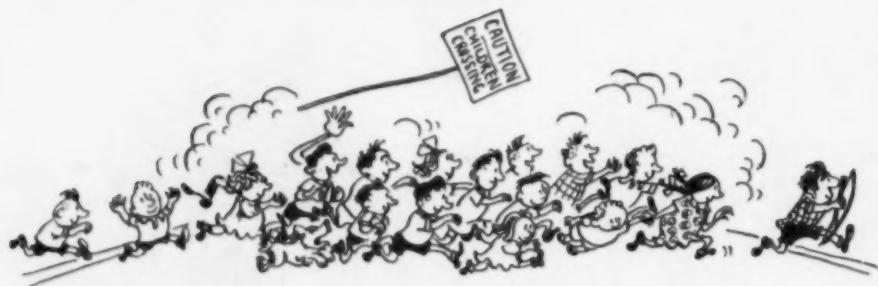
There has never been complete agreement as to whether what followed was entirely accidental, but the details were quite clear. Uncle Worm was holding Aunt Boadicea's coat and she was slipping into it and talking about the stone hot-water bottle she had sent to Uncle Worm's mother. She had nicely eased her shoulders into the coat when Uncle Worm gave it a jerk, as though to make it sit properly. In doing so he unfortunately exerted more strength than he had intended and his two fists came into contact with Aunt Boadicea's hat, which was cast in the form of a massive purple bell and fashioned from some material not unlike compressed sea-weed. The hat jerked off and clattered to the floor, and in her astonishment Aunt Boadicea bent down to pick it up. Uncle Worm at the same moment stepped forward with what may have been a cry of horror, cannoning into the protruding apex of his doubled-up wife and projecting her forward so that her head fitted neatly into the brass bowl which stood beside the umbrella-stand in Great-aunt Susan's hall.

Aunt Boadicea's head was round in shape, and the brass bowl was almost equally so, and all efforts to free the one from the other were of no avail. In the end Aunt Boadicea went out into the night looking like her distinguished namesake in one of the less fashionable helmets of the period. Uncle Worm followed her in silence and without a backward glance. We could see the paleness of his gills as he passed beyond the dim radiance which spilled out over the steps.

We never heard any more about the incident. It may have been a subject which Great-aunt Susan felt to be unsuitable for the ears of children; but one of the immediate results was correctly foreseen by Uncle Orpington, who, when they had shuffled back down the stairs and recharged their glasses, lowered himself into an armchair and observed that that was the end of the sink.







WHAT'S THE BOY MALCOLM?

"I THINK," said the woman in the corner seat, "we ought to go and see Malcolm now."

"All right," said the man opposite her. He picked up a large paper bag and they disappeared along the corridor.

Presently Elizabeth asked who I thought Malcolm was.

I had been at work on this for some little time. "I thought he might be a small baby in a large pram in the guard's van," I said.

Elizabeth was appalled. Surely people didn't put babies in the guard's van, she said: it was a barbarous idea.

"Well, what do you think he is?" I asked.

"I think he's a big dog."

"In the guard's van!"

"Yes. And that was his dinner in the paper bag."

"I don't know any dogs called Malcolm. And half-past ten seems a shade early for his dinner."

"Well, it might not be his dinner—just a biting-on."

"If that huge bag only contained Malcolm's biting-on I should think he's a shire horse at least."

Just then the man and the woman came back. The man was still carrying his paper bag, its contents apparently undiminished. The woman seemed rather aggrieved.

"I'd no idea Malcolm was right down there," she said. "I thought he was with Jessie."

The man made no reply. He put the paper bag beside him on the seat and began to read a newspaper.

An attendant came collecting people for light refreshments. We had had ours at Leeds, but he collected the man and the woman. The man took the paper bag with him again.

"Who do you think Jessie is?" I asked.

"Malcolm's aunt," said Elizabeth promptly.

"Is Malcolm still a dog?"

"No, of course not. He's their little boy."

"Why didn't they all get in this compartment, then?"

"There wasn't room."

"But there were only the two of them here when we got in."

"Aunt Jessie has some children too. A whole compartment full. There was just room for Malcolm in with them."

"But he wasn't with Aunt Jessie. He was right down there."

"He had been set upon by Aunt Jessie's children and taken refuge in yet another compartment."

"Why didn't he take refuge with his mother and father?"

"That would have been admitting defeat. Malcolm is a spirited and self-reliant child."

"But no match for Aunt Jessie's children!"

"Not all of them at once."

"What about the paper bag?"

"I'm still working on that."

The man had left his newspaper on the seat. I noticed a line of pencil writing in the margin. It said, in rather shaky capitals, "WHAT ABOUT THE WILLIAMS?"

I showed it to Elizabeth and said what about them. She frowned



in ferocious concentration, then brightened.

"Those are the Williams in the bag," she announced.

"Good lord," I said, with a startled glance at the luggage rack.

"Not the suitcase," she explained kindly. "The paper bag. William pears. Special ones, that he's taking to a flower show or something. That's why he's clinging to them so desperately."

"But why write little notes about them?"

"Malcolm wrote that."

"I thought Malcolm hadn't been in this compartment."

"Just at first he was. And when he'd eaten everything else in sight he wrote that and showed it to his father, but his father just clutched the bag tighter, so Malcolm swept out and went to Aunt Jessie, and then it happened as I said. In the meantime his father had reflected that it wasn't worth alienating his only son's affection for the sake of a few pears, so when they went to see Malcolm he took them with him as a peace offering, but Malcolm had got on his high horse and wouldn't have them at any price. So he brought them back."

"Why has he taken them with him this time?"

"He thought we might wolf the lot while he was having his light refreshments. Or he may have suspected that Malcolm meant to sneak back and whip them."

The man and the woman came

back, the man still clutching his paper bag. They seemed to have had words. They sat in their corners and glared at each other murderously. I began to envy Malcolm, whatever remote fastness he might inhabit.

In an atmosphere dense with unspoken recriminations the train chugged up to Aisgill Summit and hurled itself down into Westmorland. When the roofs of Kirkby Stephen came into view the woman leapt up.

"We're there," she cried accusingly, and rushed into the corridor. The man stood up resignedly, took down the suitcase and followed.

"Why the panic?" said Elizabeth. "We're miles out of Appleby yet."

"They've gone to collect Malcolm. At least we shall discover what he is now."

When we stepped out on to the platform the man and the woman were walking towards the barrier. Nothing, animal or human, accompanied them.

"They've forgotten him," I said. "Ought we to remind them?"

"No. I expect there's some

quite simple explanation. He may be going on to—"

"Be crowned at Scone!"

"—to Carlisle. With Aunt Jessie. Wait, though—look!"

From the last carriage of the train a small boy and an Alsatian dog had emerged.

Elizabeth and I looked at each other with more wild surmises than all stout Cortez' men put together. Which was Malcolm? Could an Alsatian conceivably be known as The Williams? Would there be a reunion, or was the rift so wide that they would all disown each other? Who had got the tickets?

The man and the woman were already passing the barrier. By tacit consent we held back to let the boy and the Alsatian through before us. The ticket collector hailed the boy cheerfully.

"Now then, Duncan," he said. "Been staying at your auntie's?"

The small boy grinned but did not answer. Instead, he addressed the Alsatian.

"Come on, Bruce," he said; and the two of them, breaking into a run, careered happily down the station approach and out of sight.

6 6

SOCIAL ENIGMA

THEY've a car and TV, have the Joneses,
And a maid, and bright things on their shelves.
What I ask, as I budget with groans, is
How the Joneses keep up with themselves.





Entrance Hall, Inigo Jones', Keween.

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No other spirit goes so far and gives so much pleasure to so many varied tastes; it is the finest investment a host can make. Here are just a few of the many good drinks made with this delectable rum.

Planters' Punch—3 parts 'Myers' to one fresh lemon juice. 2 teaspoons sugar syrup and a dash of Angostura Bitters per glass. Shake well. Pour into tall glass half filled with cracked ice. Garnish with cherry, orange slice, sprig of fresh bay leaf or mint. Serve with straws.

Myers Cocktail—2 parts of 'Myers' to one part fresh orange juice. Add 6 drops fresh lemon juice and a dash of Angostura Bitters per glass and shake well with ice. Serve in cocktail glasses.

Myers & Ginger Ale—Mix 'Myers' and a good ginger ale to your liking. Add a drop or two of fresh lemon juice and serve with ice.

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n.d.b. 337



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Three Nuns

ORIGINAL BLEND • EMPIRE BLEND



TM100



**Husband gives wife gives husband**

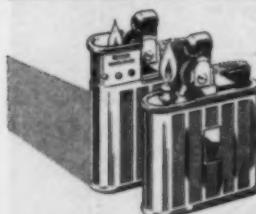
A pair of guns in an autumn syndicate? A grey mink in a strongroom safe? Or chocolates in a fit of extravagance? A Ronson Diana table lighter in a Christmas mood costs less (73/-) and makes a charming husband oblique wife gift.

**For lovers of the old and contemporary**

A Regency rake? Frivolous! A Hepplewhite house warmer? Fustian! A Chinese torchère? Fearsome! A Queen Anne table lighter by Ronson? Realistic! **4 guineas** and enchantingly finished in silver plate.

Idée élégante

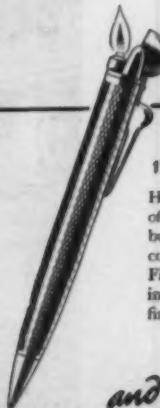
For the lover of lovely things, the Ronson Newport table lighter, is a collector's resistance piece. You might well resist it if it were more expensive but at 73/- it puts Red Anchor Chelsea and the Staffordshire dog right on the china shelf.



For form studies . . . or spinnaker haulers or scientists in wind tunnels, this frankly masculine and devant Ronson Whirlwind, featuring a little magic gadget which slides up for wind protection. Like all Ronsons (this one 50/-) the Whirlwind lights first time, every time.

17 IDEAS FOR GIFTS

some a little lighter hearted
than others



Crowning glory Something baroque and beautiful? Rococo and rememberable? What shall it be? A Viennese cupid? A Venetian grey mirror? Or a table lighter with those sumptuous yet subtle lines? The Ronson Crown, for example. At **4 guineas**.

17th suggestion for the 25th

Here's an idea that's two gifts in one for the price of one—a superb Ronson Penciliter. A precision-built Ronson and a sleek propelling pencil combined, one end lights, t'other end writes. Finished in engine-turned chromium and packed in an elegant presentation case, **55/-**. Enamel finishes **70/-**.

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good treatment...

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SHOE CREAMS
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for footwear in all
walks of life



"The Best of the Bunch"

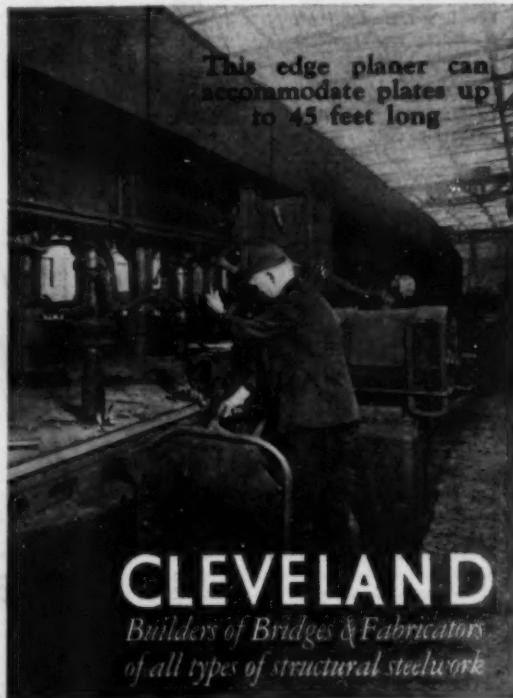
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*A
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and a
Perfect Ending
to any meal.*



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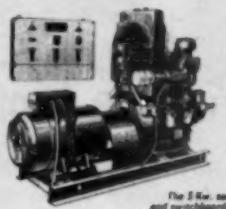
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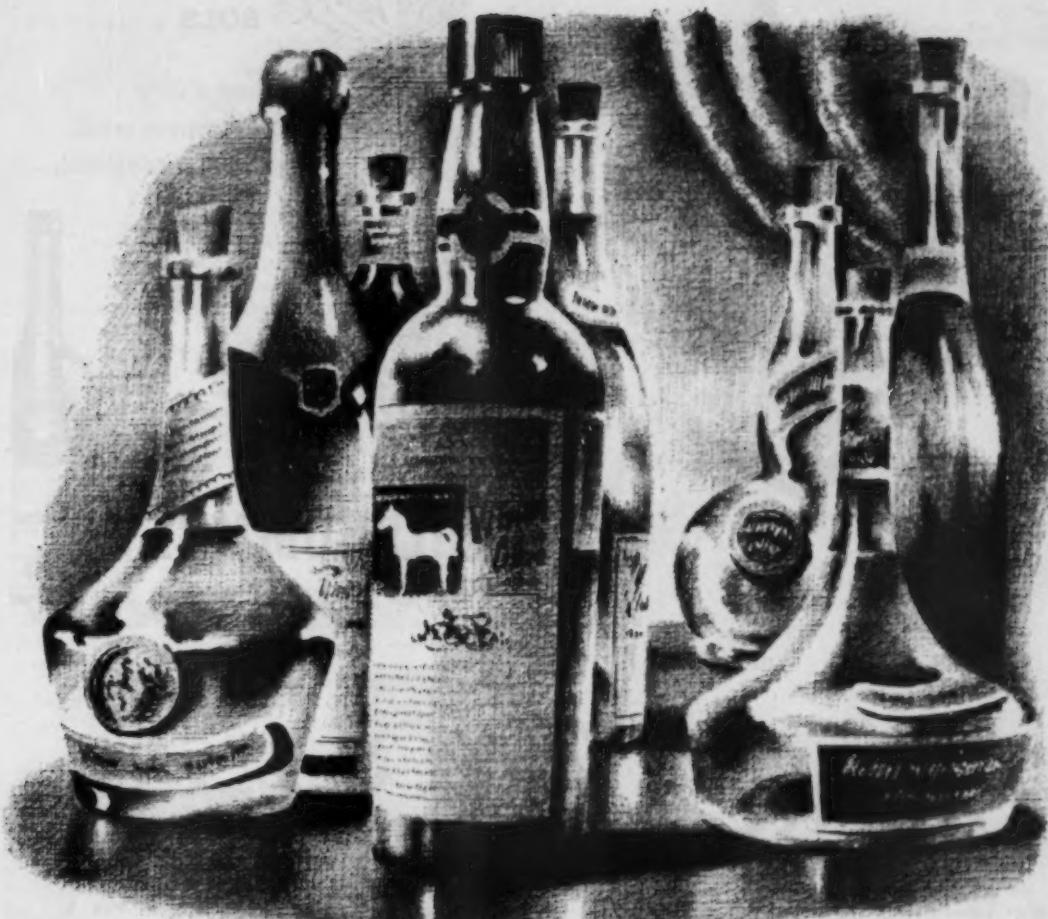
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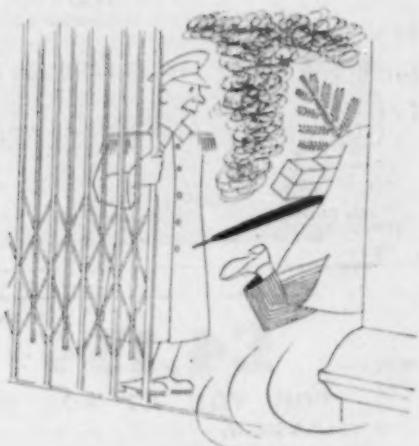


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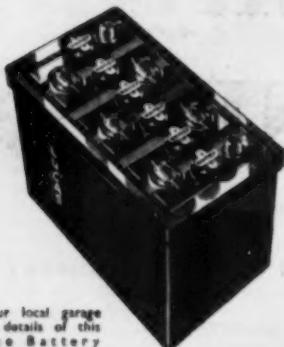
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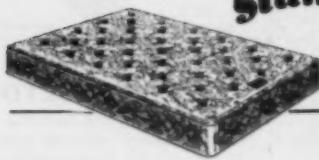
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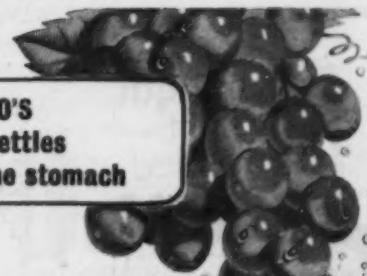


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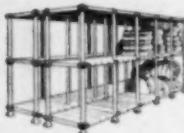
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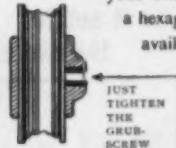
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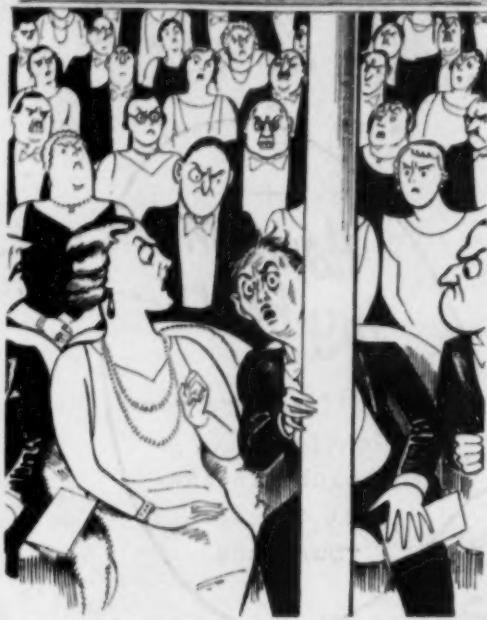




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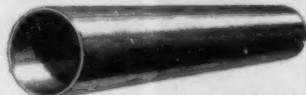


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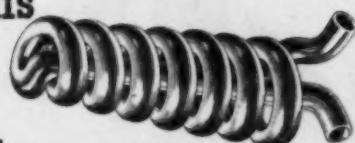
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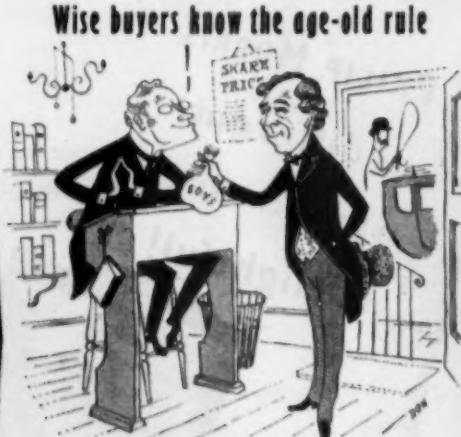
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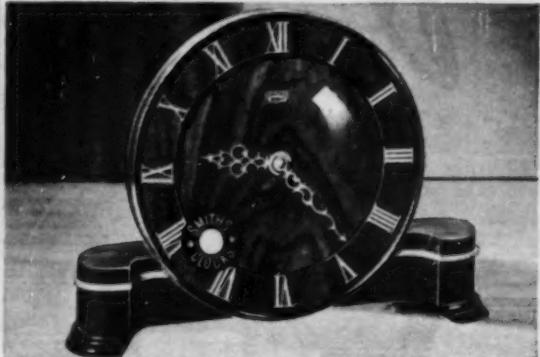


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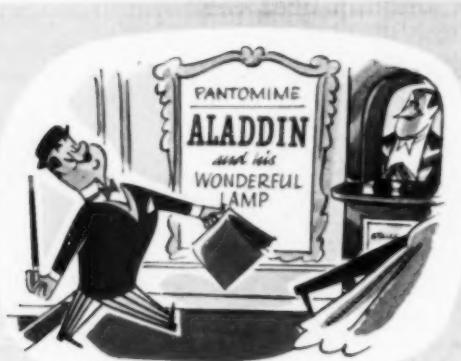
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